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**Research Report**

## Urban insecurity, migrants, and political authority: Nairobi, Beirut, Hargeisa and Yangon

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Nairobi, Beirut, Hargeisa and Yangon  
**URBAN INSECURITY, MIGRANTS,  
AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY**



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# Table of Contents

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>4</b>
Chapter 1 <b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
Chapter 2 <b>Urbanisation, migration and security</b>	<b>11</b>
Chapter 3 <b>Choice of cases and methodology</b>	<b>13</b>
Chapter 4 <b>Government perceptions and actions</b>	<b>19</b>
Chapter 5 <b>International influence and perceptions</b>	<b>29</b>
Chapter 6 <b>Plural political authorities of the cities</b>	<b>35</b>
Chapter 7 <b>Migrant challenges and strategies</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Notes</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>63</b>



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Yangon, Hargeisa, Beirut and Nairobi are experiencing high rates of urbanisation. As such they represent a global trend, which has put cities squarely on the peace and security agenda. As many other cities in the global South, they have become, or have always been, fragile economic hubs, destinations of displaced populations and migrants or sites of terrorist attacks and armed conflict.

This report suggests that we must understand cities in the global South empirically in order to understand the potential for conflict within their borders. Yangon, Hargeisa, Beirut and Nairobi provide key insights. They have high rates of immigration, are located in proximity to areas with armed conflict, and are ranked high in the 'fragile cities index'. All four cities have a high number of unregistered informal migrants, including refugees, IDPs and rural-to-urban labour migrants. Indeed, much of the growth that the four cities experience has led to unmanaged growth of informal settlements.

It is suggested that while high rates of immigration may lead to conflict, this is by no means always the case. In this regard, findings include:

- **Cities under stress:** Extensive immigration puts cities under stress as available land, clean water, and public services are stretched. At the same time, migrants usually prefer the difficult situation in the city to the conditions they left in rural or conflict-affected areas.
- **Securitising migrants:** City and national governments see migrants as a challenge to positive (predictable) urban development, and they are often seen as a security threat. While this is understandable, it has negative side effects, including legitimising harsh security measures. This creates a generalised perception of insecurity that develops into mistrust and lack of social cohesion. Urban refugees and poor migrants are therefore often forced to rely on the informal – sometimes illegal – economy and practices as part of daily survival.
- **International organisations:** They may provide crucial humanitarian aid, but may at the same time reinforce negative securitisation of migrants. This happens when their push to recognise migrants and refugees is overshadowed by, for example, anti-terrorism agendas, foreign investment interests, and fear of refugee flows to donor countries.

- **Plural authority and neglect of migrants:** The governments in Yangon, Hargeisa, Beirut and Nairobi do not hold a monopoly of force, urban planning or other functions that are associated with public authority. These conditions are challenging to navigate for external actors, for instance when providing assistance in situations of emergency, because traditional distinctions between state and non-state are misleading. There are negative consequences of contexts characterised by a plurality of authority. However, they help migrants to survive in difficult circumstances, especially in informal settlements that commonly experience neglect by central and city governments.

The study does not provide empirical evidence to suggest that migrants in and of themselves constitute a security threat in urban environments. However, there are direct and indirect knock-on effects of the migration of large numbers of people into congested urban spaces. Migration increases already considerable competition over land and jobs among the poor, which inevitably leads to tension. In short, governments become less responsive – and more defensive – which in turn leads to frustration with local and central governments and their lack of accountability.

National and city governments have legitimate reasons to be concerned with mass migration into urban spaces. However, the securitisation of migrants reinforces polarisation and tension, which may increase the risk of civic conflict. This is an important dilemma that any external actor anticipating engagement in urban areas across the global South must carefully consider. In turn, it has considerable implications for international, and therefore Danish, engagement in cities across the global South. As a consequence the report suggests to:

- Review peace and stability programming with a particular view on implications for cities.
- Strengthen the urban focus in international partnerships of the Danish Emergency Management Agency.
- Consider needs and modalities of military assistance to civil power (MACP).



# INTRODUCTION

By 2035 an estimated 60 per cent of the world's population will live in cities.<sup>1</sup> Due to the fast-growing rate of urbanisation, many future conflicts are expected to take place in urban terrains. Therefore defence and security organisations are becoming increasingly interested in understanding the trends and dynamics of cities. This report contributes with a deepened understanding of the security challenges in four cities – Nairobi, Beirut, Hargeisa and Yangon – with a particular focus on mass migration and political authority.

Cities pose significant challenges to conventional military organisations, due to their particular topography, population density, and inherent complexity of social and political relations. Urban military operations therefore lead to high numbers of casualties because militaries today, broadly speaking, lack the necessary capacity to engage effectively in urban settings.<sup>2</sup> To remain relevant in terms of handling global security tasks, governments and international organisations are increasingly preoccupied with thinking through how and when to engage security forces in urban conflicts in the future.<sup>3</sup>

This report takes its point of departure in a number of recent NATO-commissioned studies and experiments that explore urban warfare.<sup>4</sup> Experiments identify three scenarios of instability in urban domains that may eventually call for military operations and support of civilian efforts: natural disaster, mass migration and political turmoil related, for instance, to organised crime, regime change and terrorism.<sup>5</sup> The studies suggest that cities characterised by high rates of unplanned growth, limited formal government capacities and mass migration constitute the greatest risk for future conflicts and instability. Indeed, cities may pose a threat to global and regional security.<sup>6</sup>



Unsurprisingly, it is predicted that the highest risk of urban violence is in developing countries in the global South, especially Asia and Africa, where the growth of cities will predominantly take place in poor and informal settlements.<sup>7</sup> They emerge when accelerated rural to urban migration occurs and an influx of displaced populations overwhelm the capacity of city and national governments to meet the needs of large populations with limited or no access to public services (e.g. housing, jobs and infrastructure).<sup>8</sup> In such contexts, informal and non-state actors tend to take over service provision, including security and justice, leading to increasingly fragmented, plural and decentralised systems of urban governance.

NATO suggests that there is a particular risk of armed conflict if an increasing number of informal settlements turn into 'no-go urban areas' that are controlled by or serve as safe havens for armed non-state actors (gangs, militias, organised criminal networks, terrorist organisations or insurgents).<sup>9</sup> Limited or non-existent formal governance structures, it is argued, and the lack of regulation and control that they result in, are a source of friction and, therefore, potentially of violent conflict.

In turn, fragmentation of political authority and governance structures across different neighbourhoods in any one city is considered a major challenge to military operations. This means that while the physical challenges of cities certainly are important,<sup>10</sup> there is an increasing focus on whether the military may be able to support local resilience, i.e. the capacity to deal with urban fragility and external shocks. Knowing how and with whom to engage requires an in-depth understanding of the context and of the wide range of state and non-state actors that control resources and security, including city governments, religious, private, and other non-state actors.<sup>11</sup>

This report provides insight into the complexities that characterise security and authority in regard to informal settlements in Beirut, Nairobi, Hargeisa and Yangon. It is not a recipe for how military interventions may be taken forward in these contexts, should it be required. Rather, it explores characteristics of these places that may, in the short to medium-term, prove to have a destabilising effect. Specifically, it hones in on the implications of unplanned growth of informal settlements as a consequence of large incoming populations of migrants, refugees and displaced populations. How do formal authorities and international actors perceive and cope with immigration challenges, and what are the consequences for urban stability?

Moreover, how do migrants and refugees, especially those residing in informal settlements, cope with the challenges they face, what kinds of political authority are articulated in the process, and how do these authorities relate to each other?

By exploring these two questions the report analyses security challenges related to urban settings that may contribute to a better understanding of urban dynamics when it comes to the influx of large numbers of migrants and refugees. Four cities have been chosen for the study: Beirut, Nairobi, Hargeisa and Yangon. They are all capitals or major cities located in the proximity of areas of armed conflict, three of them in the Middle East/East Africa, and all have experienced considerable migration over a prolonged period of time.

The report is divided into seven sections. Following this introduction, we explain briefly what the relationship between migration and urbanisation is according to the range of studies commissioned by NATO. We then explain our choice of the four cities, the methodologies we have used, and provide a brief overview of the migration situation and population growth rates of the four cities. Chapters 4–7 constitute the analysis of the cities along four themes, which serve to address the main questions guiding the study.

- Chapter four: How do city and national governments perceive migrants and refugees coming to the city, and how have such perceptions translated into particular actions towards migrants?
- Chapter five: What has been the influence of international aid organisations in addressing the challenges of migration in the four cities, and how have wider international interests influenced host governments' framing of the migrant issue?
- Chapter six: Which authorities are involved in governance in the cities and how have they related to migrants in particular?
- Chapter seven: What are the challenges and coping strategies of poor, informal migrants, including internally displaced persons, rural-to-urban migrants and refugees?

In the conclusion we draw up the main points coming out of the study concerning the questions, the conflict risks the four cities are potentially facing, and some reflections on the implications for how Denmark and the international community may relate to urban challenges.



## URBANISATION, MIGRATION AND SECURITY

In a number of recent NATO studies on urbanisation, migration has received attention with a twofold focus on how it may challenge urban stability.<sup>12</sup> First, there is an emphasis on how migration may create ethnic, sectarian and racial tensions within cities. Second, migration and the influx of refugees into cities are seen to challenge the coping capacities of city and national governments to govern, provide services and manage conflict, thereby putting urban resilience at risk. These two foci support the assumption that mass migration, especially when this leads to unplanned and informal city growth, poses a potential security threat.

However, relations between mass migration, urban instability and armed conflict are not mechanical.<sup>13</sup> Cities can for years be the 'eye of the storm' in the midst of armed conflict and provide sanctuary for thousands of displaced people without becoming sites of conflict.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, after conflicts, war fatigue and a peace dividend can stabilise otherwise extremely strained urban societies for a long time.<sup>15</sup> In this report the insights from the four city studies suggest that whereas migrants do not per se pose a security threat, mass migration may have a destabilising effect on urban settings, which is caused by a range of political and socio-economic factors. In particular, we draw attention to how city and national governments' overwhelmingly negative perceptions of migrants, as threats to urban development and security, entail harsh security responses to migrants, which may have destabilising effects. Furthermore, the general lack of public service provision to migrants, including limited access to tenure and formal jobs, creates large socio-economic disparities that can fuel high crime rates and instability. As such, conflict may not only be caused by a lack of formal governance. It may also be the by-product of the securitisation and marginalisation of migrants by government agencies.

When discussing relations between armed conflict, migration and cities, it is useful to distinguish between 'sovereign war', involving international actors, armed 'civil conflict' and 'civic conflict'.<sup>16</sup> Armed civil conflict involves organised groups within a country; typically civil conflict has taken place in rural areas, while cities in the same or in neighbouring countries have provided safe havens for people displaced by the violence. In fact, more than half of the refugees and internally displaced people now live in urban areas.<sup>17</sup> However, cities have increasingly themselves become theatres of civil conflict, as in the current Middle East.

Finally, civic conflict refers to a type of violent conflict that is 'fundamentally urban in nature' and can develop among groups in society (gang warfare, ethnic or religious violence, organised crime), between society and the state (protests, riots, terrorism, state violence), or a mixture of the two. This kind of violence is called 'civic' because it has a relation to the state and to the idea of citizenship rights, and it is typically urban because it reflects the concentration of political power, deep inequality, and high population density. It involves more or less spontaneous and reactive violence that forms in response to the experience of powerlessness, socio-economic exclusion and spatial marginalisation. Systemic discrimination and neglect embedded in governance institutions is central to civic conflict, which seems to be an increasing part of the urban experience.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, while civil conflict (and other forms of war) has often been a driver of rapid urbanisation due to the influx of people displaced by the violence, this can feed into or generate civic conflict, which is the scenario that the NATO studies develop and what Beall et al. suggest. Here, the response of political authorities – statutory as well as other forms of authority – plays a role in generating processes that can both help to prevent, but also increase the risk of violence and conflict.<sup>19</sup> As recognised by NATO, fragmentation of political authority in cities can feed into different forms of competition and generate sectarianism around ethnic, religious and other identity-based divisions. They may lead to conflict. However, as this report suggests it is certainly also the case that the pluralisation of authority and informalisation of urban governance can contribute to the survival and resilience of poor, informal migrants and mitigate tensions.

Finally it is worth noting that civic conflict may lead to civil conflict, which seems to be what happened during the Arab Spring.<sup>20</sup>

## CHOICE OF CASES AND METHODOLOGY

The report is based on four case studies in four different cities, including visits and interviews undertaken during short field trips in January–June 2017. Members of the team interviewed formal as well as informal authorities, inhabitants of informal settlements, international organisations and NGOs, as well as local observers. Primary data is combined with secondary sources on urban data and growth rates, as well as analysis of the migrant and refugee situation in each city, which are referenced in this report.

We chose the four cities in this study to represent cities with high rates of population growth, including of migrants, refugees and internally displaced populations (IDPs), in regions affected by armed conflict. As it turned out Yangon, the largest city and commercial capital of Burma/Myanmar where many localised conflicts have been going on for decades, proved to not yet be a destination of displaced people from these conflicts, but the city has high rates of rural–urban migration, including of minority groups. The other three cities are destinations for refugees and displaced people from the wars in Syria (Beirut) and Somalia (Nairobi and Hargeisa), and while Beirut and Hargeisa have themselves been arenas of armed conflict, Nairobi has been targeted by terrorist attacks associated with the war in Somalia.

Even though they differ in terms of the capacity and style of central and local governments, they all have large areas characterised by unplanned growth and informal settlements. A recent attempt at characterising and measuring the 'levels of fragility' of more than 2100 cities across the world places Hargeisa at the highest level (4) which characterises 10–15% of the cities, predominantly located in conflict-affected areas in Africa, Asia and the Middle East (Somalia, Afghanistan,



Iraq, Yemen, Syria, South Sudan and DRC). Nairobi and Yangon, scoring at level 3, and Beirut at level 2, form part of the 60–70 per cent of cities with average fragility scores. The index grades cities across eleven variables, including: population growth rate, unemployment, income inequality, access to basic services (electricity), levels of pollution, homicide rates, terrorism-related deaths, conflict events, and natural hazards. However, statistics at city level are notoriously poor and unreliable, in particular when it comes to issues such as migrants, population growth and informal settlements, so the fragility scores and other numbers in the table below are only indicative and meant to give an idea of the proportions and rough differences between the four cities.

The figures above illustrate the high population growth rates of the four cities, and reflect a situation where a large proportion of migrants end up residing in informal settlements. There are very different histories of migration and refugee flows behind these figures, which are briefly summarised below for each of the four cities.

### **Beirut**

Beirut has always been a city of migrants. After the First World War, Armenian migrants settled and today live in an area of Beirut that has the status of its own municipality. After the establishing of Israel in 1948, twelve Palestinian refugee camps were set up and, together with informal Palestinian settlements, they are still housing approximately 300,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon with approximately 15 per cent living in Beirut. Lebanon is a tiny state (a quarter of the territory of Denmark) and many new arriving migrants, although living outside Beirut, work or beg in Beirut on a daily basis having a vast impact on city life. Due to the civil war (1975–1990), Israeli invasions and other military interventions, Beirut has been exposed to a vast internal migration, including 500,000 Shia Muslims who live in the southern suburbs (Dahiya) of Beirut. Since the end of the civil war and up to 2015, the border between Syria and Lebanon was open for migrant workers between the two states and it is estimated that approximately 500,000 Syrians were working in Lebanon. Since the Syrian war broke out in 2011, Lebanon has had the fastest growing Syrian population, estimated at over one million in 2015. More than half of the Syrian refugees today live without formal registration either in informal camps and Palestinian refugee camps outside Beirut, or in rented rooms, slums, and Palestinian camps inside Beirut. While the rural areas have an overrepresentation of women and poor Syrians, Beirut has especially attracted young males and families with their own economic capital.<sup>32</sup>

	BEIRUT	NAIROBI	HARGEISA	YANGON
<b>Population, city</b>	2.2 million	3.1 million	>800,000 <sup>22</sup>	6 million
<b>Population, country</b>	6.2 million	48.5 million	4.8 million	54 million
<b>Fragility score, 2015</b>	2.44	2.80	3.67	2.67
<b>Population growth, city</b>	3.18% <sup>23</sup>	4.16% <sup>24</sup>	>5%	>2.6%
<b>Migrant population per city</b>	270,608 registered Syrian refugees. <sup>25</sup>  46,091 Palestinian refugees. <sup>26</sup>	53,000 registered refugees. <sup>27</sup>  Unknown number of rural migrants.	Majority are returned refugees.  >80,000 foreign migrants/refugees and IDPs. <sup>28</sup>	Majority are rural to urban migrants. <sup>29</sup>  >800,000 rural migrants.
<b>No. of residents in informal settlements</b>	Unknown	>1.6 million <sup>30</sup>	>80,000	>4–500,000 <sup>31</sup>
<b>Type of city government</b>	Elected municipal government	Elected city county composed of 17 parliamentary constituencies and an elected governor  State adm. with traditional chiefs at lowest level	Clan-based elections of municipal council (2002 and 2012)	3-tiered system: Municipal government with elected mayor; state adm. with elected ward leaders at lowest level; regional government with appointed chief minister.
<b>Conflict history of city post-WWII</b>	Civil war in 1958 and 1975–1990  2005: Major demonstrations; withdrawal of Syria  Israel attacks against Hizbollah in 2006  Militant clashes in 2008	No recent war on Kenyan territory  Terrorist attacks in 2014  Election-related violence in 2007–8	Civil war 1988; 94-95  Terrorist attacks 2008	Insurgency 1949

## **Nairobi**

Flows of migrants into Kenya, and Nairobi specifically, are constituted by a variety of groups, including refugees from neighbouring countries, migrant traders and itinerant peoples. The refugees are mainly from Somalia, followed by Ethiopia, DRC and Eritrea. Most of the Somali refugees live in Eastleigh, a neighbourhood of Nairobi. While conflict in the Horn of Africa explains the influx of Somalis and Eritreans, for instance, a wide range of issues have led to rural-to-urban migration, including rural unemployment, high population growth and political instability.<sup>33</sup> Rural Kenyans commonly migrate to informal settlements like Mathare, Kangemi and Korogocho, which are home to approximately two million people. They move to these areas to find existing social networks.<sup>34</sup> They lack access to virtually all state-run services, foremost public security, and generally face significant disadvantages with respect to morbidity, mortality, and access to health services.<sup>35</sup>

## **Hargeisa**

The seat of the administration in British Somaliland from 1941, a centre of livestock trade, and the capital of Somaliland since 1991, in Hargeisa most families have a migratory background. While the city attracted a rural population before independence, most people left after Somali air forces bombed it in 1988. As Somaliland formed and managed to establish peace in the 1990s, an estimated 185,000 persons returned from refugee camps in Ethiopia, mostly families who already owned or claimed property in Hargeisa. In addition, many of the refugees who had fled rural areas during the civil war chose to resettle in Hargeisa after the war.<sup>36</sup> Due to the relatively peaceful development in Somaliland, Hargeisa has continued to attract migrants and people displaced by conflict in the region, including from south-central Somalia, Ethiopia, Yemen and Syria. Enclosures, privatisation of water, and recurring drought have brought many pastoralists to settle in Hargeisa, and an increasing number of poor Ethiopian migrants are settling in Hargeisa or passing through on their way to the Middle East or Europe.<sup>39</sup>

## **Yangon**

In Yangon rural to urban migration has a long history, but it increased substantially with the gradual political transition from military rule (1962–2011) towards a partial democracy, which also led to an opening up of the economy to the outside world, leading to new investments and growth. Movement within the country became easier after the dismantling of military rule and Yangon, as the commercial hub of the country, has undergone comprehensive developments since 2011. The majority of rural residents migrate to the city in search of job opportunities, due to an increasing lack of land and rural poverty. Others came after a massive cyclone,

Cyclone Nargis, destroyed thousands of rural homes in 2008.<sup>38</sup> Today approximately 80 per cent of Yangon's population growth is due to immigration. The majority of poor rural migrants reside in the informal settlements on the fringes of the city. According to city authorities, around 4-500,000 people are now informal settlers in Yangon, often referred to as 'squatters'.<sup>39</sup> There are no estimates of how many IDPs from the armed conflict areas in Myanmar have come to Yangon, but according to our findings, these figures would be very low, as conflict-affected populations tend to take refuge in the border areas, close to the conflict zones, or in neighbouring countries (Thailand, China and Bangladesh).<sup>40</sup>

This short overview shows that there are considerable differences between the four cities in addition to those indicated by their size and scores on the fragility index. Beirut and Hargeisa have both been at the centre of armed civil conflicts within the last couple of generations. Nairobi is mostly a destination of rural–urban migration but with a significant presence of people displaced by conflict, which is not the case in Yangon. Nevertheless, rural–urban migration is substantial in Yangon and seems to be increasing considerably the democratic transition. Politically, Yangon stands out due to its history of many years with a military and highly centralised regime, while Nairobi is still adjusting to a process of extensive decentralisation.



## GOVERNMENT PERCEPTIONS AND ACTIONS

This chapter explores how city and national governments perceive and deal with the challenges of immigration in the four cities. For each of the four cities we consider, firstly, the governments' overall perceptions of immigration for urban development and stability and, in particular, how they perceive specific migrant groups. We show that there is a general tendency of the authorities to perceive certain migrants as security threats, but that the framing and degree of such securitisation varies and is lower in Hargeisa than in the three other cities. Secondly, we address what plans and actions the governments have taken, or avoided taking, to accommodate migrants and to address the problems they associate with large-scale immigration. One focus area is security actions and another is the provision of public services, documentation and tenure. We show that the securitisation of migrants strongly influences the deployment of security actions against migrants and a general lack of service provision and formal tenure. These measures worsen the situation for migrants, and have the potential to breed crime and tensions.

### Beirut

The Lebanese authorities and the municipal government of Beirut today present the Syrian refugees as a major threat to the security, social coherence and economy of Lebanon. This securitisation marks a shift in perception between the present (2017) and the beginning of the Syrian war, when Lebanon maintained an open border policy, based on a historically-established agreement with Syria. Although this did not imply active assistance to the refugees, it meant that Syrians could freely cross the border by presenting an ID. In the first year of the Syrian war when approximately 100,000 Syrians arrived in Lebanon, the Lebanese expected the



crisis in Syria to end quickly, allowing the Syrians to return home. There were grateful memories of how Syria had extended friendly hospitality to refugees from Lebanon in 2006 when Israel, in its war against Hezbollah, bombed vast areas, including southern Beirut. Simultaneously, the virtual paralysis of Lebanese politics and the different relationships with Syria of the different political factions and thus different interpretations of the Syrian crisis caused passivity within the Lebanese government towards the Syrian refugees.<sup>41</sup> However, when Syrian refugee flows increased to over one million over two years and it became clear the Syrian war would not end in a short time; the Lebanese government was forced to take political initiatives in order to address the problem. This primarily consisted of a securitisation of the Syrian refugee problem, which legitimised expulsion of Syrians and could help attempts to increase international aid, while at the same time avoiding any measures that would lead to integration of the Syrians.

Now Syrians, including previous labour migrants, are as a broader category constructed as 'refugees' who are taking jobs, creating inflation and causing all the problems in Lebanese society such as a rapidly developing drug problem and related criminality, including rape and child prostitution – problems that also existed before the Syrian refugee crisis. There is a fear that the Syrians, like the Palestinians in 1948, will remain in Lebanon. While the securitisation of Syrians does not in itself imply that all Syrians are seen as jihadists, the Beirut authorities worry that the young, especially male, Syrian refugees could be exposed to radicalisation leading to militancy or terrorism. The authorities particularly see the Palestinian camps, where some Syrian refugees settle, as nests for radicalisation. Lebanese politicians have raised concerns that groups like al-Qaida and Islamic State would deploy jihadists among the civilians fleeing Syria, or would try to recruit among the youngsters in the slums and refugee camps. Increasingly violence and shootings are occurring in the camps, but this is usually related to gangs and drugs problems among Palestinians and Lebanese, rather than radicalisation among the Syrian refugees. In general, Syrians are constructed as a threat to the coherence of Lebanese society, mainly with reference to increased crime.<sup>42</sup>

Since 2013 the securitisation of Syrians has strongly influenced the actions of the Lebanese authorities towards the refugee challenge. The overall approach has mainly been to restrict the influx of Syrian refugees by enforcing border controls and introducing strict rules for obtaining permits to stay in Lebanon. From 2015 Syrians have needed a visa to enter Lebanon, and it became difficult to get work permits, which require documents from an employer, as well as documentation that proves one's ability to pay for one's stay in Lebanon. Syrian nationals' access to the

labour market is, in addition, restricted to agriculture, construction and cleaning services. If an employer does not sponsor them, they need to sign a pledge not to work.<sup>43</sup> Lebanon has also maintained a 'no camp' policy and, in 2015, prevented UNHCR from registering Syrians in Lebanon as refugees. This is possible because Lebanon never signed the international convention on refugees. Among the more cynical attempts, there have been efforts by Lebanese authorities to force Syrians to relocate back to Syria and suggestions to set up refugee camps inside Syria. Constant pressure is put on the Syrians through forced removal of informal tented camps.<sup>44</sup>

Overall, the state and the municipality of Beirut have left matters like housing, jobs, social affairs etc. in the hands of local citizens and networks based on local power-sharing, and private market forces. The government has authorised the Beirut municipality to handle refugees but without allocating additional funding, which means that the municipality is left to cooperate with international donors and to rely on donor funding. International organisations have put some pressure on the authorities to support refugees, such as in the education and health sectors, but this is reliant on international funding, and the Lebanese authorities take little responsibility.<sup>45</sup> For instance, the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) has opened the doors of Lebanese public schools to Syrian refugee pupils. According to the UNHCR more than 470,000 registered, school-aged Syrian refugee children were enrolled in Lebanese public schools in January 2016.<sup>46</sup> However, despite these efforts, it is estimated that perhaps as many as 300,000 Syrian children are still not enrolled in schools.<sup>47</sup> In many cases this is because the refugees are not registered, which falls back on the lack of recognition of refugee status by the Lebanese authorities. Conversely, the threat of radicalisation and the presence of jihadists have led to both heavy-handed security measures and softer anti-radicalisation programmes. Different political elites and the security apparatus cooperate to fight terrorism and jihadism, which besides military operations have included heavy surveillance, armed control posts in Beirut, especially in the downtown area, strict control of entry gates in the Palestinian camps in the north and south and also, but more discretely, in the camps in Beirut. The restrictive approach of the authorities comes with a number of challenges and negative consequences. Because of the 'no camp' policy, most Syrian refugees are living in informal tented camps in the poorest parts of Lebanon, inside the Palestinian refugee camps, or in the slum areas of Beirut. The shift in attitudes towards the Syrians from kind hospitality to mistrust, anger and enmity, is causing tensions between the different populations that sometimes leads to fights and murders. The problems are especially manifest in the slums and in the Palestinian refugee camps

in Beirut where unemployment, drugs and criminality are increasingly challenging life for the most vulnerable people. The negative attitude towards and securitization of Syrians, fails to see the refugees as a potential resource that can also have a positive impact on the economy. While Syrians before the crisis earned money in Lebanon and spent it in Syria, they now spend everything in Lebanon.

### **Nairobi**

Both the city and the national government consider the Somali population, in Nairobi in particular, to be a high security threat. The Somalis include both Kenyan Somalis, relatively wealthy Somali migrants who arrived in Nairobi before the war in Somalia, and more recent refugees from Somalia. The majority of Somalis are settled in Eastleigh, a neighbourhood of Nairobi. Since 2011, when Kenya joined the African Union (AU) forces in the war against Al-Shabaab in Somalia, Kenyan authorities have linked Somali migrants to national insecurity and instability. In 2012 the government ended all urban refugee assistance and announced that refugees should relocate to the rural camps in northern Kenya. In other words refugees are unwanted in the urban centre, and an encampment policy was adopted to keep refugees away from cities.<sup>48</sup> The Al-Shabaab terrorist attacks in Nairobi in 2013 further reinforced the securitisation of Somalis, which subsequently led to an increased conflation of Somalis in Eastleigh with Al-Shabaab, as suggested by an interviewee from an Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA):

“ Al-Shabaab attacks became so many in many parts of the country that they thought that Al-Shabaab is the same as being Somali, and you can't differentiate a Kenyan Somali and a Somali from Somalia. It was taken for granted that the problem was in Eastleigh, and the area's connection to [the camps of] Garissa and Dadaab where there are buses every day. ”

The securitisation of refugees in Nairobi marks a shift in prior government perceptions. Before the large influx of 300,000 Somali refugees in the early 1990s there were only around 15,000 at any one given time. Refugees could freely settle, and were mainly seen as contributing to the economy.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, Eastleigh has become one of East Africa's most vibrant commercial centres, with some \$100 million of business each month. No established refugee policy was in place prior to 2006 when the Refugee Act was passed and the Department of Refugee Affairs created.

It was chiefly the political crisis in Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia in 1991–1992, and subsequently in Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, that generated an extensive influx of refugees into Kenya.<sup>50</sup> Between 2010 and 2012 the number of refugees rose from 430,871 to 630,097. This development gave rise to harsh new laws that make a direct link between refugee status and security, and which inform an approach that is focused on restriction and containment. These laws impact the period of detention without charge, the tapping of communications without protest, the erosion of media freedom and the limitations placed upon the right to protest.<sup>51</sup> The most heavy-handed security measures against Somalis happened after the 2013 Al-Shabaab attacks.

In 2014 the Kenyan police launched the 'Operation Sanitization of Eastleigh' (publicly known as 'Operation Usalama Watch') with the purpose: 'to flush out Al-Shabaab adherents/aliens and search for weapons, improvised explosive devices [...] so as to detect, disrupt and deter terrorism and other organized criminal activities'.<sup>52</sup> The operation resulted in the relocation of over one thousand Somalis to refugee camps in northern Kenya and hundreds of deportations back to Somalia.<sup>53</sup> For Somalis who have remained in Eastleigh the operation resulted in a climate of fear and distrust, which shapes present everyday lives and interactions in the neighbourhood, and in particular relations to the Kenyan police. Human rights organisations have documented numerous human rights breaches by the police.

The central position of Somalis in the Kenyan government's approach to refugees has also affected government perceptions of migrants from the rural areas, like the Kikuyus and Luos, albeit they are perceived as potential criminals rather than as terrorists. Poor rural migrants mainly live in informal settlements such as Kibera, Mathare, Korogocho and Kangemi. They constitute 60-70 per cent of Nairobians, yet are crowded onto just 5 per cent of the city's land. This reinforces a long history of residential segregation going back to colonialism, where racial segregation was part of colonial policies to discourage the influx of African populations into the city.<sup>54</sup> The first informal settlements emerged during the colonial administration as a result of such policies. After independence in 1963, racial segregation was gradually transformed into residential segregation along the lines of socio-economic status and legal tenure.<sup>55</sup> Consequently, there is a clear segregation between low-density high-income areas in the western, northern and southern parts of the city, and high-density low-income areas in the east.<sup>56</sup> This segregation also influences urban planning and unequal service provision.

While the population grew from 350,000 at independence in 1963 to around 3.1 million today, the increased demand for adequate housing and public services has not been met. Consequently, the growth of informal settlements has accompanied the increase of the population. The government's failure to provide access to land, housing and services to the growing number of residents can be attributed to the lack of financial resources and poor management. Consequently, all residents in the poor settlements, including newcomer migrants and those who have lived there for a long time, have significant disadvantages in common in terms of low access to public services, including security provision.<sup>57</sup> These conditions reinforce the government perception that informal settlers are uneducated, unhealthy and dangerous. Indeed, the informal settlements are perceived as crime zones. This perception partly legitimises extra-judicial killings by Kenyan police, which have been widespread since the early 2000s.<sup>58</sup> The IOM equally reports frequent evictions.<sup>59</sup>

### **Hargeisa**

Unlike in the other three cities, the national and city authorities in Hargeisa do not consider immigrants, displaced people from the countryside, or refugees/migrants in general as a security threat. This is different from the situation in south-central Somalia, where authorities and international organisations suspect Al-Shabaab of using the movement of IDPs as vehicles for entering cities like Baidoa or Mogadishu and establishing control of settlements. Like other 'gatekeepers' in charge of settlements on private land, they are suspected of appropriating large shares of aid and charging exorbitant fees for staying in the settlements.<sup>60</sup>

In Hargeisa, the preoccupations of the authorities relate to problems of petty crime within the informal settlements and, increasingly, they see these as potential hideouts for organised crime, such as smuggling of alcohol and of people who are on their way from Ethiopia to the Middle East and Europe. Ethiopian migrants are generally not welcomed, and authorities interviewed believe that organised crime is growing with the Ethiopian migration. The authorities consider Ethiopians 'illegal aliens' and have undertaken arbitrary detentions as well as deportations in 2011 and 2016 without proper screening for asylum seekers, such as the Oromo, who have fled Ethiopia as the political situation has worsened in recent years.<sup>61</sup>

Compared to Puntland and south-central Somalia, Somaliland has proven more capable of taking the problems of displaced populations into account in legislation (including a 2015 policy on IDPs) as well as practical interventions.<sup>62</sup> This may be related to the fact that the migrants are not securitised to the same extent as in the

other three cities. Since the 1990s, the Ministry for Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (MRRR) has been responsible for coordinating and supervising the response to displacement.<sup>63</sup> The MRRR works with support from the government regarding the everyday administration, but the ministry relies on international funds for projects to improve the situation of displaced people or to resettle them. Due to the recent history of complex emergencies in the region and the pronounced presence of international organisations, humanitarian agencies and NGOs, Somaliland has developed a system for reception of returnees, migrants and displaced populations. This includes registration (but not necessarily issuing of ID/ documents, which only half of the inhabitants in informal settlements have), some distribution of relief, some allocation of public land for temporary settlement, and plans for the relocation of displaced persons to permanent settlements.

However the challenges remain daunting for the city of Hargeisa with very limited resources, a somewhat ad hoc development of the capabilities and powers of central and city authorities during the 25 years of de facto independence and extremely high levels of unemployment. For instance, the government is supposed to provide land for resettlement projects, but this is difficult since there is very little public land available. The municipality of Hargeisa is responsible for assigning the land, but while a lot of public land has been sold off to private persons and companies, poor returning refugees and displaced people have settled on the remaining public land since the late 1990s, such as in 'State House' and 'Stadium'. While some resettlement has taken place at the outskirts of the city on donated and public land (e.g. Ayala), other resettlement projects await that the municipality can make land available.

The municipality has offices in several of the informal settlements, and some local committees have been organised to undertake communication with the authorities and aid organisations. While the city is currently developing the provision of piped water to cover 50 per cent of the city's needs, most of the informal settlements rely on buying water from water trucks. Sewerage, sanitation and waste disposal is generally only available to 20 per cent of the inhabitants of the settlements, while there is some provision of primary education and basic health care.

### **Yangon**

The Yangon city authorities and the regional government have a largely negative view of the many poor rural migrants who predominantly reside in the city's growing informal settlements, totalling 4–500,000 people (out of six million inhabitants). Informal settlers are conveyed as strangers rather than legitimate residents of the city and they are portrayed as potential security threats in terms of rising criminality.



The fringes of the city, where the largest informal settlements are located, are spoken about as crime zones that threaten urban development and the security situation of the inner city. They are seen as havens for criminals and gangsters or 'professional squatters', who make a business out of the incoming migrants by renting and selling illegally occupied land. Informal settlers are, in general, not treated as poor migrants who need services and who are potential assets as a labour force for the economic growth of the city. There is a strong perception that if the government formalises the settlements or allocates land to migrants, they will sell the land and squat in other areas.

Despite the change from a military regime to a democratically elected government in 2016, when Aung San Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) took power, little seems to have changed in the government's negative attitude towards informal migrants and settlers. The current city government of Yangon has no coherent plan to address the high influx of rural migrants and the growing informal settlements. Instead of providing public services and housing, the city authorities resort to security-based operations. Evictions continue to constitute the main political tool to deal with immigration, typically used to make way for new business developments and high-end housing projects, or to clean up formal settlements, including in the central business district and downtown areas. This reflects a clear prioritisation of elite and upper-middle class interests.

In recent years there have been efforts to draw up plans to relocate informal settlers by expanding the city and to construct affordable housing. However, in practice these plans have not materialised because a lack of available public finances and private investors who would invest in affordable housing makes this proposal unrealistic for informal settlers. In June 2016 the new NLD chief minister of Yangon announced a non-tolerance policy towards squatters and tried to initiate a squatter clearance and relocation plan. The initiative was presented as part of an effort to clear out criminal elements in townships with informal settlements and a 100-day crackdown on crime was launched at the same time, which reinforced police patrols in collaboration with local ward leaders.<sup>64</sup> However, the eviction and relocation plan was never executed because there was a lack of financing and no viable resettling plan. Instead, evictions have regularly occurred without relocations. They come with no alternative housing and compensation, because the authorities see the settlers as criminals who have illegally settled on public lands, even though many have lived there for years and some have land documents issued by local administrators.<sup>65</sup> Evictions have led to protests by some settlers, which give way to violent clashes and police arrests.<sup>66</sup>

While evictions have not led to large-scale violent opposition to the government, a brewing dissatisfaction towards the political authorities is noticeable among the migrants. The government's negative stance is creating a constant fear of evictions and high levels of mobility within and between city spaces. These conditions are further heightening livelihood uncertainties as informal status makes it difficult for migrants to get formal jobs and stable incomes. To obtain legal documentation and access to services, including education, informal settlers depend on informal channels and informal fees to local officials. Our and others' studies<sup>67</sup> suggest that the ones who are making a business out of informal settlements are not the poor migrants, but some local leaders and other powerful persons, including city government officials and political parties. Simultaneously, these local 'big people' (Lue Kyi), as people call them, are also those who are more sympathetic to the newcomers, and who allow them to reside and get by in the ward, despite the hardships.

Overall, the criminalisation of informal settlers can be seen to create conditions for increased crime, tensions and disputes within the informal settlements. Migrants and authorities interviewed for this project believe that the fear of evictions and lack of formal documentation create forms of mobility and livelihood uncertainty that breed social problems and crime, including mistrust between neighbours, alcohol abuse and drugs.

Finally, so far in Yangon, informal settlers are treated as a general category, irrespective of ethnicity and religious affiliation. Most poor informal migrants belong to the majority ethnic group, the Bamar, which also dominates city and national leadership, but the surge in anti-Muslim sentiment and nationalist politics that has led to outbreaks of communal violence between Buddhist and Muslim groups in other areas of the country, could also affect Muslim migrants in Yangon in the future.<sup>68</sup>

### **Chapter analysis: government perceptions and action**

The growing migrant and refugee population is undoubtedly testing the coping capacities of cities in terms of service provision, infrastructure, and housing. However, whereas migrants can make significant contributions to urban economic growth,<sup>69</sup> the tendency among city and national governments is to see migrants not only as obstacles to positive urban development, but also as security threats. This securitisation is framed in different ways across the four cities, and varies with respect to which migrant groups are securitised. In Beirut and Nairobi Syrian and Somali migrants are conveyed as security threats within the overall framing of

terrorism and radicalisation, irrespective of the migrants' socio-economic status. This is coupled in Beirut with a general view that the Syrian refugee flow challenges the cohesion of Lebanese society and breeds crime. In Nairobi non-Somali Kenyan informal settlements are also perceived as crime zones. A similar scenario exists in Yangon where all informal settlements, in which the vast majority of poor migrants live, are deemed illegitimate and seen as havens for criminals and as obstacles to urban development investments. In Hargeisa the Somali refugees/IDPs/migrants are not seen as a security threat, and this has the positive effect that the government supports resettlement efforts and aid programmes for the migrants. Conversely, Ethiopians are unwanted and seen as security threats, leading to deportations.

Overall, the securitisation of migrants – as either potential criminals or as terrorists – leads to the exclusion of migrants from urban plans and it legitimises particular actions and inactions, including:

- Deportations or evictions with no accompanying compensation and resettlement, leaving migrants to settle informally elsewhere (Beirut, Yangon, Hargeisa [Ethiopians], Nairobi).
- Anti-terror and anti-radicalisation actions that further criminalise the migrants (Nairobi and Beirut)
- Lack of public service provision, legal status and housing to migrants, which leaves them in a life of informality and poverty traps (Beirut, Yangon, Nairobi). While authorities in Hargeisa do not consider informal settlements or migrants in general as posing a security threat, the lack of public finances and capacity limits service provision in poor, informal settlements.

While we do not have evidence to suggest to which degree security threats in these cities are real, securitisation has been used to serve particular economic and political interests.

## INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE AND PERCEPTIONS

This chapter explores the role of international aid organisations in addressing the challenges of migration in the four cities. In doing so, it is also important to consider the wider international interests, political as well as economic, that influence the operations and perceptions of international organisations towards migrants, as well as how city authorities engage with these interests. We show that international aid organisations provide significant relief to refugees in Beirut, Hargeisa and Nairobi, and that they have tried to encourage governments to recognise the refugees and address the needs of poor migrants, including the urban poor in Yangon. However, domestic politics and economic interests in Beirut, Nairobi and Yangon, which disfavour migrants, frequently challenge these international efforts. In addition, wider international framing and narratives related to terrorism and radicalisation can also reinforce city governments' securitisation of refugees, which at times undermines humanitarian assistance to refugees, particularly in Beirut and Nairobi.

### **Beirut**

The Lebanese government has left social service provision and assistance to refugees in the hands of the international community. International organisations, especially UNHCR, UNWRA, the EU and local as well as international NGOs, including the Danish Refugee Council and Red Cross, have played a tremendous role in supporting refugees to meet basic needs such as housing expenditures, food, shelter, primary healthcare and education. Simultaneously, internationals have supported some softer anti-radicalisation programmes, while the security-related operations are handled by the Lebanese authorities.

International assistance in Beirut faces significant political challenges, which are influenced both by the Lebanese authorities and the domestic political concerns of the donor countries. While international aid organizations have tried to pressure the Lebanese government to give legal status and assistance to the Syrian refugees, including better access to the formal labour market, they are reluctant to level too much criticism at the government. This is partly because they do not want to risk losing their permission to work in the country. Conversely, they worry that high political pressure could stir up sectarianism, since this could lead to serious conflicts and more refugees fleeing, for instance to the EU. International organisations therefore try to balance their pressures on the government with efforts to keep refugees in Lebanon.

In addition, the role of international organisations in Beirut is influenced by how the Lebanese government portrays refugees as threats to the stability of Lebanon and beyond. This narrative particularly highlights the risk of terrorism and radicalisation, as well as the threat of more refugees leaving for Europe, if international funding fails to improve refugee conditions. Hence, the Lebanese government has requested large sums (\$10–\$12 billion in 2017) of international funding in the name of mitigating the risks of instability for Beirut, for Lebanon as a whole, as well as for Europe.<sup>70</sup> What is happening, however, is that a large share of international funding ends up lining the pockets of the Lebanese elite networks and politicians due to widespread corruption.<sup>71</sup> Thus, the elite gains from the refugee crisis while it avoids necessary political and economic reforms that could ease the situation and bring corruption down. Meanwhile, the crisis is worsening the socio-economic problems of poor and middle-class Lebanese, including the Palestinians in the country.

Another challenge is that international aid that targets the Syrian refugees has created tensions locally in poor areas, because poor Lebanese citizens do not receive public services and assistance. Tensions are even more acute in the Palestinian refugee camps. While non-Palestinian Syrians living in the Palestinian camps receive aid from the UNHCR, the Palestinians from Syria and the Lebanese Palestinians living in the camp get less help from UNWRA due to budget restraints and increasing burdens caused by the incoming Palestinians from Syria. This imbalance has caused tensions in the camps and led to social unrest and demonstrations outside UNWRA's main office in South Beirut.

In terms of security: the municipality of Beirut, the police, the military intelligence and the Palestinian factions in the camps have cooperated with NGOs and international partners, including the municipality of Copenhagen, to fund anti-radicalisation

programmes. These include outreach and soft dialogue initiatives between refugees and different Lebanese and Palestinian groups, including street sports and other community programmes.<sup>72</sup>

### **Nairobi**

International aid agencies have long been aware of urban refugees in Nairobi, but it was only very recently that they began to address their needs. This is partly because the Kenyan authorities did not recognise urban refugees, and international aid could only legally be channelled to rural camps. The mass influx of refugees since the 1990s made it possible for the UNHRC and NGOs to gradually encourage the Kenyan government to address urban refugees, leading to the 2006 Refugee Act and the subsequent registration of urban refugees. This allowed international aid agencies to provide emergency relief and to help refugees gain access to services and income generating activities.<sup>73</sup> UNHCR and IOM have also worked with repatriation of Somali refugees.<sup>74</sup> The UNHCR coordinates an Urban Refugee Protection Network of humanitarian organisations in Nairobi. They work with advocacy and legal issues, child protection, livelihood, education, health, and gender-based violence.<sup>75</sup> However, refugee assistance in the city is much more challenging than in the camps, because the refugees live dispersed across the city and among residents who have resided there for a long time, like in Eastleigh.<sup>76</sup> In addition, since 2012 when the Kenyan authorities reinforced the rural encampment policy, it has again become difficult for international aid organisations to legally address the needs of the up to 100,000 urban refugees.<sup>77</sup>

Whereas NGOs and international aid organisations have tried to lobby the Kenyan government to recognise urban refugees, other international interests related to terrorism in particular have influenced the securitisation of migration in Nairobi (and Kenya more broadly). External support to the government in the field of anti-terrorism has been continuous since the late 1990s. The 1998 bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi raised the profile of transnational and domestic terrorism in the Horn of Africa, and Kenya became an 'anchor state' and the 'frontline' of the War on Terror that President George Bush declared in 2001. A raft of counter-terrorism measures was put in place in response to the attacks and threats made to the country. The measures have been controversial, and at times considered to be externally imposed, primarily by the US.<sup>78</sup> Domestic Kenyan concerns grew after the 2013 and 2015 Al-Shabaab attacks, as noted earlier.



International counter-terrorism support to Nairobi has been deeply politicised. Kenya's President (2017), Uhuru Kenyatta, has not shied away from using international concerns over terrorist activities in East Africa to put his partners under pressure when they have appeared reluctant to support Kenya's efforts in Somalia. In Nairobi, rights groups have accused the US and UK-trained Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) of rights abuses and extrajudicial killings. Indeed, Western security officials privately complain that Kenyan security services frequently ignore their recommendations. Somalis, in particular, have been subjected to these policies, as evident in the aforementioned 'Operation Sanitization of Eastleigh', which has produced a climate of fear and distrust among the Somalis in Nairobi.

### **Hargeisa**

Being located in a relatively peaceful area in a region that is otherwise affected by multiple armed conflicts and recurring droughts, Hargeisa hosts many international NGOs and aid organisations. Together with the government, these actors are integrated into the international emergency architecture with local 'clusters' responsible for co-ordinating action in shelter, water and sanitation, and protection. International organisations have therefore been influential in forging the response to displacement. In addition, Islamic relief organisations have an extensive presence in Hargeisa, working not least through the mosques and the Sheiks. UN-Habitat and UNDP work with the city and national governments to support incipient urban planning, legislation on land, and improved taxation.

Apart from humanitarian and development concerns, much of the international presence in Hargeisa is driven by an interest in reducing out-migration from the region and limiting the influence and spread of radical Islamist movements such as Al-Shabaab. Consequently, a number of international and foreign programmes have helped strengthen security forces, including the intelligence service, the coast guard, the Rapid Response Unit specialised in counterinsurgency, and the Special Protection Unit, a police force for close protection.

Therefore in Hargeisa, akin to Nairobi, international assistance is concerned both with aid to migrants as well as with wider security agendas. A core difference from Nairobi, however, is that the Hargeisa government does not legally inhibit international assistance to the urban refugees, which allows for more targeted international support in partnership with the government.

## **Yangon**

In Yangon, international involvement with respect to migrants is very low, as the focus on migrants has so far been on assistance to IDPs and refugees from the civil war and ethno-religious violence in the border areas of the country. This places the Yangon case in a different position than the other case studies, both in relation to the wider security and political context and to the fact that Yangon does not receive a large number of refugees.

Only recently have international organisations in Yangon paid attention to labour migration in Myanmar, and so far there has been no engagement with urban migrant challenges, documentation or provision of assistance to urban migrants.<sup>79</sup> UN-Habitat is involved in urban planning and development in Yangon. It has tried to encourage the city government to recognise informal settlements and urban poverty, but UN-Habitat has not itself had a specific focus on migrants. According to the organisation it has been a major challenge to convince the city authorities to accept the category of poor urban citizens, which reflects the general negative attitude towards informal settlers. UN-Habitat has done a mapping of slums and informal settlements in Yangon together with the city government, but is reluctant to publicise the data. They fear that the regional government will use the maps to evict people without viable tenure alternatives.<sup>80</sup> Overall, international investment interests have dominated urban planning projects in Yangon. New developments tend to focus on high-end housing and commercial businesses for which informal settlers constitute an obstacle.

### **Chapter analysis: international influence and perceptions**

There are two ways that international aid organisations can help improve the conditions of urban migrants, which can also in the longer-term help mitigate urban tensions stemming from mass migration:

First, by providing humanitarian aid and protection. International organisations provide substantial humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Beirut and Hargeisa, but not to the poor rural-to-urban migrants in Yangon and Nairobi. In Myanmar and Kenya the focus is on assistance to refugees who reside in rural refugee camps, and although there have been international efforts in Nairobi to support urban refugees this has been undermined by the Kenyan governments' illegalisation of urban refugees. The Beirut case also shows that humanitarian aid may be used politically and is subject to elite corruption. In addition, when aid is

given to refugees or IDPs within a city, it can create tensions between targeted groups and other poor urban residents, who do not receive aid; sometimes the refugees and IDPs are not even interested in being identified and becoming visible to governments for fear of the consequences.<sup>81</sup>

Secondly, by working with governments to recognise migrants as part of the city, rather than as illegal occupants and security threats.<sup>82</sup> Only in Hargeisa have international organisations been successful in their attempts to push governments to recognise and act positively towards migrants. One reason could be that the question of migrants plays into sensitive political and historical dynamics that outsiders are only able to influence to a limited degree. The question is whether international organisations can help reduce, rather than reinforce, the tendency to securitise particular migrant groups. This is essentially a question of whether migrants are framed as security threats, victims in need of humanitarian aid, or as potential contributors to urban development (i.e. as consumers, labourers and innovators). The latter framing is absent in all four cities, and while the humanitarian framing is present, there is a tendency for international involvement to indirectly reinforce the framing of migrants as security threats. This is especially the case when the humanitarian agenda clashes with other national and international interests, be they economic (investments in Yangon), political (donor concerns over migration as in the cases of Beirut and Hargeisa), or security related (Beirut, Nairobi and Hargeisa).

## PLURAL POLITICAL AUTHORITIES OF THE CITIES

This chapter focuses on how political authority is structured in the four cities. By authority we understand entities that can claim to make collectively binding decisions with some level of compliance and legitimacy among the population within their field of command. As the chapter shows, cities are not managed exclusively by formal, governmental authorities, such as the state and city government. A number of de facto authorities – such as clan elders, confessional leaders, political parties, chiefs, and local strongmen – undertake functions of governance and control over access to resources such as land, water, jobs and protection in the cities. These landscapes of plural authority are to some degree organised spatially, producing a highly fragmented urban space, but formal and informal authorities are also overlapping and interrelated. As we conclude, the policies and the neglect towards migrants and poor informal settlements that we analysed in chapter 4 tend to reinforce the informal practices and forms of authority described in the following pages. It remains an important question to ask to which degree the combination of neglect and securitisation increase the conflict potentials in fast-growing cities in the global South.

### **Beirut**

The landscape of public authority in Beirut is highly fragmented. The official system of government in the city reflects the Lebanese system of power-sharing among the elites representing and controlling the different confessional societies. This was written into the constitution at independence in 1943, and confirmed by the Raif Agreement in 1989, which ended the civil war in 1990. The main groups – the Sunni Muslims, the Christians, and the Shia Muslims – have guaranteed representation in

the parliament and each have their balanced share of governmental power, from the top through all kinds of state institutions and agencies to the level of municipalities and villages. Thus, for example, the governor of Beirut is traditionally Greek Orthodox, while the mayor belongs to the Sunni Muslim Future Movement.

This delicately balanced system has two important implications. First, it has resulted in a state where self-serving, sectarian political elites stand together against all threats to the security of the state as well as to the power-sharing structure. At the same time, the system is politically paralysed when it comes to all other issues, including public services, which consequently are left to be taken care of by private initiatives, confessional societies, civil society, international donors and NGOs.

Recently two non-sectarian, non-party grassroots movements have challenged the power-sharing system, its corruption and the inefficient public services. One is the #YouStink movement, which organised large demonstrations against the government's mismanagement of garbage in 2015. They demanded better governance from the government but they also revolted against the praxis of treating individuals as members of a sect instead of as citizens of the state. Another is Beirut Madinati (My Beirut), which became popular during the 2016 municipal elections in Beirut with broad support from all groups in the city as well as from the Lebanese diaspora. It received some 30 per cent of the votes but did not obtain representation due to the electoral model. As the non-sectarian movements posed a political threat to the system, the leading groups, including the Shia and Sunni Muslims, the Druze and the Christian parties, got together and with the use of both legal and non-legal measures, including unfounded arrests and detentions, they succeeded in keeping the grassroots out of politics.<sup>83</sup> Both movements addressed the migration problems, demanding better conditions but while Palestinians were active in Beirut Madinati, it is unclear if they actually incorporated Syrians.

The second main implication of the power-sharing system is a territorial–governmental compartmentalisation of the city along the lines of confessional communities, security actors, and political parties, even to the level of streets. For instance in one neighbourhood, the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party controls the streets, with their own flags etc., operating in informal ways in the neighbourhoods, but at the same time collaborating with the government. Other examples are Dahiya, controlled in part by Hizbollah, or the downtown controlled by Future Movement. As everyday matters of governance, housing, land, jobs, and services are left to local leaders and citizen networks, including religious leaders, private entrepreneurs, public employees (in an environment marked by widespread corruption),<sup>84</sup> and sometimes

even criminal organisations, the different parts of the city are highly uneven, depending not only on social class, but also on relations between local constituencies and the political elites.

The Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut are no exception, apart from the presence of UNWRA in various services. Security is formally taken care of by the Palestinian factions, such as Fatah, Hamas, and other groups,<sup>85</sup> in a negotiated balance and cooperation that also, in the case of Beirut, includes cooperation with Hizbollah and Lebanese Military Intelligence.

### **Nairobi**

In Nairobi, the City County is charged with the responsibility of providing a variety of services to residents within its jurisdiction. Responsibilities have increased after a pervasive decentralisation of central government in 2010.<sup>86</sup> They include physical planning, public health, social services and housing, primary education, infrastructure, public works and environmental management. However, the capacity and finances of the Nairobi County are limited and the presence of public authorities and services is highly uneven across the city. In terms of waste management, for instance, the county manages 40 per cent of the waste, while the private sector manages 20 per cent. The remaining 40 per cent is not collected or disposed of in any systematic way, which causes environmental and health hazards to urban dwellers, in particular in the many informal settlements.

Even though public authorities cannot ensure land tenure, health, jobs or security in poor or informal settlements, such as Mathare, Kangemi and Korogocho, they are not totally absent. The police have a presence, but due to widespread police violence and corruption, people only report to the police when other avenues of recourse are exhausted. While Al-Shabaab's attack on Nairobi's Westgate Mall in 2013 has had the most comprehensive implications for the city's Somali community, the attack has generally legitimised – also in the eyes of the public – more heavy-handed security operations labelled as counter-terrorism campaigns.

In Kenya, chiefs play a direct role in local law and order. They are government-mandated and the lowest tier of government in local administration. As such, they have powers to prevent crime, and to detain and hand over suspects to the police. The close ties to government-led security provision are seen in their role in Nairobi's community policing, known as Nyumba Kumi, which means 'ten households' in

Swahili. Every ten households form a cluster that nominates a representative. This person is made responsible for knowing who lives in the cluster, and reporting their security concerns to the chief.

However, people tend to draw on a variety of other security providers and personalised security arrangements, shaped by age, class, neighbourhood and ethnicity. Such security providers may not be formally regulated, and they range from loosely cohesive groups of young men and associations of neighbourhood peers, to relatively hierarchical and disciplined organisations. Their structures and activities establish a degree of local order and predictability, a social security system, with their ward at the centre. The local community is a key element of identity and determines whom one can connect with and rely upon. Even though identity within the community is not necessarily primarily determined by ethnicity, ward-based associations are nevertheless often seen as dominated by a single ethnicity and there is a perceived segregation in urban society.

Moreover, such community-based associations engage in a wide range of other services apart from security provision: supporting job creation through car washing, rearing goats, pigs and geese, etc. In Mathare, for instance, some groups of young men engaged as local security guards also collect garbage.

### **Hargeisa**

The landscape of plural authorities in Hargeisa cannot be understood in terms of formal vs. informal authorities since formal authorities – central as well as local – to some degree are permeated by interests of kinship and lineage, sometimes presented as 'clans'. However, clans are not actors as such. Rather, elders and leaders draw on the authority that the cohesion of lineage groups at different levels can give, an authority which gained significance after the collapse of the central Somali government. The peace processes after Somaliland's independence in 1991 led to a system of power-sharing between different sub-clans, and overlapping business and clan interests gained influence on future government policies by helping fund the demobilisation of clan militias and developing national security forces in the 1990s.

The power-sharing is evident in ministries and many other institutions, where the head is from one sub-clan, the deputy from a different sub-clan, and the director-general or secretary from a third. This practice also has some influence in the security forces, which take up 50% of the meagre state budget. The leadership of the (many) different entities – the army, the national security service, the police, the

custodial corps etc. – is spread out across a number of clans and sub-clans, with different degrees of control over recruitment. In general, kinship – by way of elders' recommendations – is important in recruitment for jobs in the state and local government, but other factors are at play as well (qualifications, same school, football etc.)

The power-sharing and the limited budgets and capacities weaken the power of public authorities. "We have a collaborative, not a regulatory government", as one state official expressed it. The municipality of Hargeisa is no exception, even though resources from selling and taxation of public land are an important source of income. But the powers of the municipality are limited by overlapping and as yet unclear jurisdictions and responsibilities of many ministries, as well as by the influence of business and clan interests. The lineages that traditionally own the land in the territory of the municipality appoint candidates for district and municipal councils. This results in strong majority control over the districts (five, in the case of Hargeisa, together making up the municipality) to the detriment of minority and weaker sub-clans.

As a way of identifying who or what is an authority in Hargeisa, including in the informal settlements, we may look at how disputes and conflicts are resolved. Here we find three kinds of authority:

- The elders who draw on customary law (*xeer*). Of particular importance are those elders who are responsible for payment of reparation to other kinship groups in what we may understand as a collective insurance system. Elders are generally legitimate but dependent on enforcement by police.
- Sharia courts and religious leaders (the Sheiks) that are prominent in domestic conflicts over inheritance. They increasingly represent a set of legitimate authorities that cross-cut clan-divisions.
- The judicial system, which is seen as biased in favour of the wealthy and powerful. Authorities of the first two systems are involved in at least 60% of disputes, but typically more than one set of authorities are involved in dispute resolution.<sup>87</sup> For example, the Ministry of Interior is involved in disputes in which people have been killed, and is called upon to enforce decisions. In general, women, youth and minority groups are not favoured by these systems and are therefore vulnerable to lose whatever entitlements they may have.



## Yangon

Formal governmental authority in Yangon is highly complex. Here we see the Yangon City Development Committee (YCDC), a kind of municipal government chaired by an elected mayor, which shares authority with two other tiers of government. The YCDC is officially the main administrative body of Yangon and technically independent of the government. It raises its own revenues through taxes, fees, licenses and property development, and is responsible for urban planning and some services, including water, garbage, sewerage, roads and bridges, fire-fighting, maintenance of public property, and business licenses. Responsibilities also include administration of urban lands and the construction, repair and demolition of formal and informal settlements, but without any enforcement powers.<sup>88</sup>

However, in reality, the YCDC has to share power and authority with both the chief minister of the regional government, and the general administrative department (GAD) that answers to the military-run Ministry of Home Affairs. While the YCDC decision-making follows orders from the Chief Minister, the GAD (and hence the home affairs ministry) has a decisive influence on daily affairs through their representatives at township and ward levels to the informal '100 household leaders'. This includes registration of inhabitants and de facto power over people's access to services. Moreover, while efforts have been underway to draw up plans to create housing and improved infrastructure for the rapidly growing urban population, this has been a politically controversial battlefield between the different official authorities, including disagreements over the city limits and accusations about the different authorities' relations to private investors.

The unclear lines, levels and jurisdictions of formal authority are evident in the chaotic administration of land, which in practice leaves much room for an extended informal economy of land and multiple land regimes. De facto authorities comprise businessmen, political parties, government officials from different authorities, as well as local leaders like ward administrators and '100 household' leaders. However, at the same time, by selling and dealing informally in land these figures are informally accommodating the high demand for housing by newcomers. This gives the migrants a place to stay, but leaves them in a precarious situation without official titling.

Spatially, Yangon is highly fragmented between affluent and poor areas, and between formal and informal settlements. Even though public authorities are represented in all 33 townships, their presence and practice differ substantially across the townships. Hlaing Thayar township, with large informal settlements of migrants, provides a vivid illustration of fragmented and plural authority in the city. Here, we find three types of areas that are governed in different ways and which have different forms of service provision:

- The large, gated housing estates with elite and upper-middle class residents, which are under official administration but which also have private security provision and services (school and hospital).
- The lower and lower-middle class areas with formal tenure and official state administration. Basic, low quality services are provided, but informal authorities or informal dealings by government officials are widespread.
- Informal settlements on public land inside the township or on its fringes. Here there is no public service provision, registration or tenure security, and the only de facto authorities are informal household leaders and sometimes political parties and religious leaders, such as monks who help poor settlers. However, overall the residents are left to cater for themselves.

**Chapter analysis: Plural authority.**

In the four cities authority is fragmented, both in terms of 1) the institutions, organisations and individuals that command authority, and 2) how authority is distributed spatially across the cities.

First, in these contexts of fast growing cities, the fragmentation of authority means that the conventional distinctions between state/non-state authority and formal/informal governance are of limited help in understanding authority. In the four cities formal government is itself highly fragmented, and equally works in informal ways. The structures of government are very complex, with unclear and changing delimitation of jurisdiction, responsibility, and lines of command between different tiers, levels and departments of national, city and local government. This produces multiple conflicts, overlaps and gaps in the exercise of authority. In order to make things work despite these inconsistencies, officials and local power brokers develop

a range of informal and personalised interactions, which also include corruption and illicit deals. Governments have channels of communication that reach neighbourhoods where migrants settle, but they do not necessarily work as intended. In Yangon and Nairobi there are official structures all the way down to ten (Nairobi) and one hundred household (Yangon) levels. In Hargeisa local committees are also expected to report information to higher levels of government. In Beirut, intelligence services are segregated and information is shared to some degree through the security arrangements at the core of power-sharing in the city.

In the two cases of institutionalised power-sharing, Beirut and Hargeisa, it is hard to identify the parties to the power-sharing as either state or non-state. In Beirut, the result is a highly segmented form of governance in which the confessional communities take on more governmental functions, including security.<sup>89</sup> In the lineage/clan-influenced governance of Hargeisa, power-sharing is more diffuse and negotiated, resulting in a state with limited regulatory capacity but also with unclear 'non-state' centres or structures of authority.

People with knowledge and strong connections may exploit the inconsistencies in formal governance to their advantage, as for example in the case of land tenure in Hargeisa and Yangon. In contrast, newcomers or external actors without deep insights have few chances of manoeuvring the de facto systems of governance.

Secondly, there is huge spatial variation within the four cities in terms of the intensity of governance as well as the constellation of de facto authorities. This follows socio-economic difference (rich/gated communities and poor/informal settlements) and ideas about who are the 'proper' citizens of the cities. The migration histories of the cities have been mapped onto the expanding urban space, with segmentation into confessional/ethnic/national communities (Beirut), racial/ethnic/regional communities (Nairobi), IDP settlements (Hargeisa) and poor informal migrant communities at the fringes of the city (Yangon). The spatial variation is reflected in service provision, including of security.

While the governments in all four cities are highly focused on security issues, informal settlements experience only sporadic presence of government security forces, which are focused on raids, searches and evictions, rather than protection. Everyday security is provided mainly by non-state actors like militias and political parties (Beirut), neighbourhood-specific youth groups and vigilantes (Nairobi), loose networks of local leaders (Yangon), and a combination of local committees and the police (Hargeisa). In terms of other services, informal settlements and migrants tend not to get access through formal government provision, but through the informal practices of the various fragmented authorities.

The data on plural authority in the four cities point towards two tentative conclusions.

- The complex relations and practices of authority make it extremely difficult for international organisations and other outsiders to make sense of and orient themselves in the networks of governance and authority in the cities. Empirical analysis of how power and authority are distributed is a starting point for gaining a better understanding and for engaging in an informed manner.
- The governmental neglect of migrants, combined with the effects of securitisation, reinforces informal governance and the economies around these. While this informality can enable migrant resilience in the cities by giving them some access to land, housing, services, and jobs, it also plays into and reinforces the fragmentation of authority.



## MIGRANT CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

This chapter addresses how poor urban migrants, including refugees and displaced persons, cope with the challenges they face and what forms of authority and organisation such coping strategies activate. For each of the four cities we first briefly address what the migrants themselves view as their main challenges. Whereas economically well-off migrants can also be securitised, like Somalis in Nairobi and Syrians in Beirut, we focus here on the poor urban migrants, who face the severest challenges both in terms of survival and insecurity. This particularly regards those unregistered poor migrants who reside in informal settlements or inside camps with no tenure security.

The chapter also looks into the double function of religious and ethnic identities that can cause both marginalisation and securitisation by official authorities and provide support networks that are important to migrants' capacity to survive in the city.

### **Beirut**

The government's no camp policy and its unwillingness to have Syrian refugees registered are increasing the challenges for the refugees, but also affect the Palestinian refugees, and the Lebanese in general. The number of unregistered Syrians is increasing. Many try to hide from the authorities by living in different types of informal settlements, including the Palestinian camps where the Lebanese police and military have no access.<sup>90</sup> We can identify different strategies employed by Syrian refugees in Beirut and Lebanon. While it seems that poorer refugees and female-headed households with children tend to stay in informal rural settlements,

e.g. in the Bekaa Valley, more resourceful households who can pay the rent in the city, and single men living in overcrowded rooms seek to etch out a living in poor neighbourhoods or in the Palestinian camps.<sup>91</sup>

Apart from the sectors where Syrians legitimately can work if they have a work permit from the government (agriculture, construction and cleaning services)<sup>92</sup> young males find jobs in shops, bars, gas stations, hotels etc., thus putting pressure on other groups in Beirut who used to do these jobs such as the Palestinian refugees and poor Lebanese citizens. The result is social dumping and an increase in informal occupation. Poor families also send their children to beg, and there are cases of Syrian refugees who cope by marrying off their daughters to wealthier Lebanese.

Syrian refugees also seek support and contacts through civil society organisations, such as neighbourhood associations, community centres, religious centres and political parties, which correspond to the confessional and communal identities of the refugees. As described above, the government's policy of 'outsourcing' basic services to the private sector, leaves much space for such organisations and parties that seek to make up for the lack of public services by helping their communities, including, to some degree, the Syrian refugees that fit the identities (Shia, Sunni, Armenian, Kurdish, etc.)<sup>93</sup> Some of these civil society organisations have support from international organisations and NGOs that establish relations through local 'link-workers'.<sup>94</sup> In this way, confessional and other affiliations become instrumentalised to resolve the daily needs.

### **Nairobi**

While poor migrants from rural Kenya have the same socio-economic problems as refugees and asylum seekers that arrive from the Great Lakes Region or the Horn of Africa, the latter have additional problems related to their status.<sup>95</sup> They face considerable protection concerns, and Somalis, in particular, have been caught in the government's suspension of the registration of asylum seekers, effective from 2012. Harassment from the police is common, often in the form of random document checks, with the specific aim of extorting money. However, documented as well as undocumented refugees are often required to pay some form of bribe. In addition, refugees face threats of deportation as well as arbitrary detention. Support from the UN and NGOs for new refugees and asylum seekers is extremely limited. Hence, upon arrival, they are collected by relatives or friends. Those who are not, find their way to where their ethnic community is concentrated. Somalis and Ethiopians go to Eastleigh, for instance.

Being a refugee in Nairobi makes finding employment inherently difficult. Language, lack of start-up capital, lack of information and training as well as medical complaints resulting from war injuries are some of the reasons given. Indeed, many refugees end up in a vicious circle where they are unable to make money for food, and therefore are unfit for the majority of jobs that often are physically taxing. The most common form of first employment is sales/retail, domestic work and catering. Unaccompanied children commonly do domestic work or sell food or clothing in the streets. Comparing refugees from the Horn of Africa with those from the Great Lakes, the former group is significantly quicker to find work. This is likely due to stronger Somali networks in the city.

Be they a Kikuyu or Luo from rural Kenya settling in Mathare, or a Somali moving into Eastleigh from southern Somalia, security concerns are equally substantial. Both groupings are considered a security threat to middle-class Nairobians, whether as criminals or terrorists. As such, it is inevitable that there be a fundamental reliance on personalised arrangements, both when it comes to security and to finding a job. To maximise physical and economic security, people must draw on private networks and individual relationships that are shaped by age, class, neighbourhood and ethnicity/clan.

In areas like Mathare, poverty and the lack of opportunity force many people to choose a criminal career, which, in turn, impacts directly on the levels of physical violence that people in poor settlements experience. A 2006 survey noted that 'as many as 63% of slum households report that they do not feel safe inside their settlement [...] At least one person [per] household [reported] actual experience of a criminal incident over the previous twelve months'.<sup>96</sup> As explained by a young man in Mathare: 'In every family there is a gangster, a prostitute and a street kid.' Moreover, many households are single parent, and from an early age, children are expected to contribute financially to sustain the family. In short, overall social inequality, and the poverty and social marginalisation that underpin it, contribute to a context in slum areas where physical violence is expected, and even accepted as a condition of social life. On the flip side, this also means that some inhabitants use aggression as a survival strategy, and a way of asserting oneself: 'they know you are gangster – they must know that you are aggressive.'



## Hargeisa

The most salient challenges for poor settlement dwellers in this city are the precarious livelihoods, the lack of tenure security, and the very limited access to water, sanitation, sewerage and waste disposal.<sup>97</sup> The greatest fear in the settlements, tightly packed with huts and with very few passable roads, is that fire breaks out. Petty crime and gender-based violence happen, but the reported incidents are relatively low (two in one hundred report having been victims of crime). Only half of the inhabitants have Somaliland ID, which, however, people do not consider a problem. 'Nobody asks for documents'. Some people have documents proving the right to occupy land, but these are informal and therefore the cause of disputes.

Contrary to what the literature on displaced populations in the area suggests, only 1–2% of the households in the settlements have access to remittances. This suggests a correlation between the lack of extended (transnational) networks and the very low socio-economic status of the households that end up in the settlements.<sup>98</sup> Food aid reaches settlements sometimes during the Ramadan, but otherwise people seek their livelihoods in the city. In an economy with 50% unemployment and 75% youth unemployment, most households rely on highly vulnerable 'self-employment' in the informal sector. The location of the settlement is important for the ability to develop livelihoods, and people in the settlements close to markets, construction sites or roads feel privileged relative to people in settlements at the fringes of the city.

In Somali society, coping strategies for migrants rely in fundamental ways on lineage and belonging to sub-clans. However, there is huge difference between the protection and help people can hope for, since some clan-lineages are stronger and more dominant in the region of Hargeisa than others. Migrants who belong to dominant lineages are not really considered 'newcomers'. Conversely, people from lineages and clans of south-central Somalia experience more problems in Hargeisa. They have higher rates of unemployment, face discrimination in their job search, have almost no access to family support in cases of food shortage, and perceive that distribution of government assistance in the settlements is skewed towards majority clans, which also taints NGO assistance. In addition, when they experience problems of security they resort to the police or the authorities, while most others seek out clan elders, the local committee, or the Sheik for protection and dispute settlement.

While some feel they are being discriminated against, we also find people who have organised committees for mutual help that are not based on lineage. 'We're not clan, we're a mixed nation'. Host communities have also played a role in assisting displaced people, partly due to Islamic principles of treating guests and the vulnerable well, and partly due to a sense of cultural attachment and the ideology of Somaliness (Somalinimo). These sentiments do not always extend to non-Somali Ethiopian migrants who experience discrimination when they seek to, or pass through, Hargeisa in increasing numbers.

### **Yangon**

In the informal settlements of Hlaing Thayar township, the main challenges facing migrants are lack of tenure security and official documents, like ID and household certificates, which are necessary to obtain formal jobs and get access to schooling, electricity and water. Without documents, migrants are forced into the informal economy with unstable incomes. Fear of evictions and lack of financial means create high levels of mobility between and inside informal settlements. Mobility makes it difficult to build trust and social cohesion among neighbours, which creates the grounds for underlying tensions and suspicion. Many migrants are also highly indebted, and difficulties in paying back loans to fellow residents often lead to local disputes. Many migrants feel they have nowhere secure to go with their problems, and that no one protects them against crime, because the local ward leaders do not recognise them as legitimate residents. They get no official help from the government or from any NGOs, so there is a sense that the migrants have to largely cater for themselves.

The survival and protection strategies of informal settlers predominantly involve the activation of informal networks of kin, fellow villagers from back home and neighbours. Most employment is generated by the informal settlement itself, such as informal vending or house rentals. Poorer migrants buy electricity from more well-to-do migrants who have generators, and there is also an internal moneylending economy. The networks and strategies of the informal settlers do not develop into a form of enduring collective organisation among the groups of migrants.

Instead, people rely on already existing ward leaders and other local 'big men', among natives and older migrants, who support the informal migrants in various informal ways, which simultaneously reinforce their own local power base and give them an income. Local ward leaders are aware that sale of public land is illegal, but nevertheless some of them are involved in issuing informal landownership papers to migrants. This gives the migrants a sense of tenure security, although it cannot safeguard them against evictions issued by higher-level authorities. Ward and household leaders are also involved in a widespread informal economy around legal/counterfeit documents, such as recommendation letters to obtain jobs and enter schools. Obviously migrants with better financial means and connections have an advantage. Political parties in the opposition were also found to assist newcomer migrants with housing and they were involved in informal land sales and dispute resolution. Some migrants use membership of political parties to protect their businesses, while political parties assisted migrants as part of sustaining 'shadow-like' local power bases.

Importantly, some migrants also get assistance from religious leaders. Christian pastors assist migrants with education, food handouts and to obtain jobs abroad that generate remittances for poor families. The Buddhist monks help with schooling for the poor families and give shelter to newcomers until they find a job and place to stay. Building a monastery in informal settlements is also seen as a way to protect an informal settlement from government eviction, because of the power and respect afforded to Buddhist institutions in Myanmar. Some monks also collect donations to build roads in the informal settlements. Roads are seen as a strategy to provide the informal settlements with an appearance of formality and durability, which many migrants believe could help safeguard them against eviction.

In general informal settlers stick to themselves and try to avoid getting involved in collective and public affairs. The lack of collective organisation in most informal settlements underscores a general atmosphere of insecurity, and a sense that it is difficult to trust anyone. This, in addition, undermines the city government's assumption that migrants as a group pose a security threat and a political challenge.

## **Chapter analysis: Migrant challenges and strategies**

Livelihood insecurity and lack of access to formal jobs leave migrants to seek informal, low-paid and unstable incomes across the four cities. Poor or nil access to public services like clean water, healthcare and electricity, increases the necessity to earn money, which tends to leave migrants in a vicious circle of poverty and indebtedness. Tenure insecurity and limited, if any, access to public security contribute to an atmosphere of uncertainty and insecurity. Such problems can be exacerbated when migrants (Yangon) or refugees (Nairobi and Beirut) lack legal status and official documents, which make them more vulnerable to harassment or deportation by security forces and others. However, as the case of poor Kenyan migrants in Nairobi shows, documents do not make them immune to harassment or exclusion, while in Hargeisa, lack of documents creates more problems for Ethiopians than Somalis.

Such challenges shape migrants' coping strategies, as well as the forms of authority and organisation they involve. First of all people rely on kinship and relations that depend on shared identity of clan, ethnicity, religion, and/or place of origin, without which it is difficult to get by in the city. Secondly, they depend on brokers in the informal markets for jobs, housing, land, documents, electricity, etc. These are either individuals from among the migrants themselves or local, formal or informal, leaders and administrators who control access to resources, as depicted in the chapter on plural authorities. In some areas of Nairobi, such as Mathare (but not Somali Eastleigh), this includes youth groups and vigilantes who provide some protection in their own communities, but this was not found in the other cities where there is a general lack of local protection from crime or where crime rates are low, as in Hargeisa.

Finally, more altruistic actors support migrants with services, relief, and sometimes protection, such as religious leaders (monks and pastors in Yangon for instance, and Islamic organisations in Hargeisa) or civil society organisations (including international humanitarian aid in Beirut, Nairobi and Hargeisa). These initiatives however suffer from problems of coverage, scale and sustainability.

Our material does not allow us to answer whether these dynamics generate increased risk of tensions or civic conflicts in the four cities, but tentatively we suggest that:

- Identity-based ties (clan, ethnic, and religious) are very important to migrants' survival, but they also produce inequalities among migrant groups. Those with ties to stronger groups or who are targeted by special programmes (such as 'refugees') have an advantage in getting access to resources and tenure security. This can breed tensions between and within groups, as well as reinforce sectarianism where this exists, such as in Beirut.
- The highly informal strategies around migrants' survival arguably reproduce the fragmentation and pluralisation of authority. While this can create an impression of ungovernability, the prevalence of informal networks of plural authorities does not necessarily increase the likelihood of civic conflict. Such networks keep the informal settlements working and enable people to survive, and therefore also contribute to the cities' resilience in the face of the challenges that migration brings.
- It seems that so far in the four cities, recent poor migrants and refugees have not engaged in large-scale organised, let alone violent, movements, which have threatened to disrupt or overturn local political orders.<sup>99</sup> Instead of enduring collective mobilisation, migrants have tended to engage in more individualised, networked survival strategies.

## CONCLUSION

In Denmark and beyond, migration and terrorism dominate policies relating to development and security. The Danish Foreign and Security Policy Strategy's primary objective for 2017–18 relates to 'migration, instability and terrorism', and emphasises the need for international and European cooperation to prevent and manage these threats to stability in Denmark and beyond.<sup>100</sup> The strategy comprises instruments relating to Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), migration management, and contributions to peace and stability activities, including capacity building of national and regional security forces. While some of these instruments, of course, are used in cities – Denmark has supported CVE programmes in Nairobi – the Danish Foreign and Security Policy Strategy does not explicitly consider how city contexts shape the effectiveness of these instruments.

High rates of urbanisation globally have put cities on the peace and security agenda, and they are expected to be the main sites of conflict in the future. Cities are attracting attention as fragile economic hubs, destinations of displaced populations and migrants, and sites of terrorist attacks and armed conflict. At the same time, they are increasingly becoming assertive political actors vis-à-vis state governments. Combined with strategic policy connections between migration, instability and terrorism, these trends raise the need to better understand the links among different instruments and partnerships for peace and stability in urban areas.

This report suggests that we must understand the cities empirically in order to understand the potential for conflict within their borders. The report does this by exploring dynamics in Beirut, Yangon, Nairobi and Hargeisa that experience high rates of immigration, are located in proximity to areas with armed conflict, and have

high scores on the 'fragile cities index'. All four cities have a high number of unregistered, informal migrants, including refugees, IDPs and rural-to-urban labour migrants. Indeed, much of the urban growth resulting from immigration has led to unmanaged growth of informal settlements. However, while high rates of immigration may indeed lead to conflict, this is, as the report shows, not always the case.

In fragile cities, considerable flows of newcomers into cities challenge the already strained capacity of formal governance and urban economies to accommodate the growing populations. However, in addition to the lack of capacity of governments to manage the considerable challenges to ensure availability of jobs, land and public services, the fact that migrants are regarded as a threat to local security raises tension, and thereby the risk of what we in this report call 'civic conflict'.

Below, the report summarises the main findings of the study. This is followed by reflections on their implications for future engagement by external actors, including Denmark, in fragile cities that experience high levels of migration.

### **CITIES UNDER STRESS**

Extensive immigration is putting cities under stress as available land, clean water, infra-structure, public services and jobs are stretched. Consequently, competition is intense. While worrying about the consequences this may have, governments in the four cities partially ignore the implications thereof (Yangon), have very limited resources to remedy them (Hargeisa), or 'outsource' the task of dealing with the problems to sectarian parties, civil society, and the market (Beirut). Still, migrants usually prefer the difficult situation in the city to the situations they left behind in rural or conflict-affected areas.

## SECURITISATION OF MIGRATION

In the four cities, city and national governments generally and understandably see migration as a challenge to positive (predictable) urban development. In addition, migrants are seen as a security threat, either in terms of terrorism spilling over from civil conflicts in neighbouring countries (Beirut/Nairobi) or crime (Beirut/Nairobi/Yangon/Hargeisa). Particular migrant groups are securitised, based on economic status or identity (religion/ethnicity) or a combination of the two. It is not surprising that generalised securitisation of specific groups has a number of negative side effects:

- It legitimises harsh security measures against migrants, including evictions (Yangon/Nairobi), anti-terror operations (Nairobi/Beirut), and deportations (Somalis in Nairobi/Ethiopians in Hargeisa/Syrians in Beirut). This creates a generalised perception of insecurity that in turn develops into mistrust and lack of social cohesion between migrants and already established communities, notably in informal settlements.
- Securitisation co-exists with and reinforces a general lack of recognition of migrants as legitimate residents of a city, and many migrants therefore have no legal status or official documents. In Beirut and Nairobi the governments have prohibited urban refugee registration altogether. However, formal citizenship does not guarantee access to tenure, jobs or services as the case of Nairobi shows. In general, lack of legal recognition leads to limitations on rights, and neglect in terms of public service provision.

The lack of legal status, tenure security and access to public goods, means that urban refugees and poor migrants are often forced to rely on the informal economy and practices, and sometimes illegality, as part of daily survival. Security actions against migrants reinforce informality, which may in turn increase the risk of informal settlements becoming havens for criminal activities and groups (Beirut, Yangon, and Nairobi).

## INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS CAN REDUCE OR REINFORCE SECURITISATION OF MIGRANTS

International organisations provide crucial humanitarian aid to some urban refugees and IDPs (Beirut/Hargeisa/Nairobi), but it remains a difficult international task to help mitigate, rather than directly or indirectly reinforce the securitisation of migrants. The latter may happen when international efforts to push governments to legally recognise migrants and refugees, are overshadowed by the anti-terrorism agenda (Nairobi/Beirut), foreign investment interests (Yangon), and fear of refugee flows to donor countries (Beirut).



## PLURAL AUTHORITY THRIVES ON THE NEGLECT OF MIGRANTS

Governments in Hargeisa, Yangon, Nairobi and Beirut do not hold a monopoly on the use of force, the enforcement of contracts, planning, registration or other functions that are associated with public authority. Informal economies and the authorities that manage them, thrive on the conditions in poor settlements and the complex relations of governmental structures and responsibility. Such landscapes of authority are challenging for external actors to navigate, for instance when providing assistance in cases of emergency. While there are many negative consequences of a plurality of authority, this condition also helps migrants to survive in informal settlements, precisely because of neglect by the formal government.

## MIGRANT COPING STRATEGIES DO NOT NECESSARILY INVOLVE COLLECTIVE ORGANISATION, BUT REINFORCE PLURAL AUTHORITY AND INFORMALITY

Lack of access to formal jobs, tenure, legal status and fear of harassment by government security forces, make migrants use informal networks as strategies of survival in the city. This has two primary implications:

- Apart from family networks, identity-based networks around ethnicity, religion and locality are important to migrants' survival. Hence whether newcomers to the city have access to such networks or not is a factor that creates difference between migrants' ability to survive in the city.
- The strategies of migrants are reinforced by, and further strengthen the informal character of governance in poor urban settlements, politically and economically. Informal governance tends to be managed by already existing power elites and local big men, rather than by newcomers and poor migrants themselves. Consequently, the organisation among the latter is weak, at least in the short term.

Based on the above points, what is the potential for conflict with respect to migration and informal settlements?

This study does not provide empirical evidence to suggest that migrants in and of themselves constitute an urban security threat. However, there are direct and indirect knock-on effects from the migration of large numbers of people into congested urban spaces. It increases already considerable competition over land, services, infrastructure, and jobs among the poor, which inevitably creates tension, especially with those already living in the host communities. In addition, it increases demands on state and city resources more generally. Government institutions become less responsive – and more defensive. In turn, this leads to frustrations with local and central government and their lack of accountability.

States have legitimate reasons to be concerned with mass migration into the cities that they (nominally) govern. The reasons for this are mentioned above. However, the securitisation of migrants reinforces polarisation and tension, which may increase the risk of civic conflict. Migrants are often used as scapegoats by politicians. They are used politically as an excuse to not deliver on their promises, or for using police violence against specific groups. This may be ethnically motivated, such as in the case of Somalis in Nairobi, or socio-economically motivated as in the case of many, if not all, poor urban settlements. The double marginalisation that migrants, and especially refugees, often experience may challenge urban stability in the long term.

In the short term poor migrants in Yangon, Hargeisa, Nairobi and Beirut have not organised to the effect of disrupting political order. But the question is whether frustrations, over time, can translate into ‘civic conflict’, the urban forms of violent unrest related to struggles over rights, recognition and resources that we introduced in chapter 2? A common assumption is that the opening of channels for civil, political engagement of marginalised groups can defuse such outbreaks of violent conflict. However, there is also the possibility that even without such changes in urban politics, violent conflict might be deferred or remain latent for a long time.<sup>101</sup> In our study, this could be the case in Hargeisa, where a certain euphoria and enthusiasm around the national project (Somaliland) is still present despite poverty and lack of public services, or in Yangon, where authoritarian governments have upheld strong central control.

However, there are different scenarios for potential civic conflict in the cases at hand:

- Migrants may engage in spontaneous protest to access services.
- Political/confessional factions and informal networks of power among local elites may capitalise on the migrants' challenges, which can reinforce instability and competition for power (Nairobi, possibly Beirut).
- Lack of organised security provision may breed violent conflict between criminal networks, gangs and vigilantes in and between informal settlements, some of which rely on protection and other services from these actors (Nairobi).
- The exclusion of poor migrants from mainstream society opens the possibility for violent political (and ethnic/religious) movements from within or outside the country in question to recruit and mobilise, in particular young men (Beirut).

### **Strategic implications and considerations**

The aim of this study has been to provide insight into the particular dynamics around poor areas of Yangon, Hargeisa, Beirut and Nairobi, specifically vis-à-vis migration. Who holds the power to make decisions? How is security organised? Any intervention, be it humanitarian, development or military will have no chance of succeeding without an in-depth understanding of such local level dynamics. By way of concluding, the study lays out three implications of the report's findings for Danish policies and international and bilateral partnerships.

#### ■ **Review peace and stability portfolios with a focus on implications for cities**

The study points to dilemmas in terms of how cities address challenges related to massive migration, and how international actors may influence how these challenges are tackled. Denmark and international organisations have developed a wide range of instruments in the field of peace and stability, especially since the turn of the century. This report suggests that it would be relevant to review how these instruments, and their implementation, impact cities' capacity to deal with migration.

- **Strengthen an urban focus in the international partnerships of the Danish Emergency Management Agency**

The study illustrates the importance of building disaster preparedness in rapidly growing cities, including in informal settlements where standards (for buildings, density, infrastructure etc.) generally do not apply, and where liaison with informal authorities is necessary for extending the reach and effectiveness of existing disaster-related capabilities.

- **Consider needs and modalities of military assistance to civil power (MACP)**

It is obvious that the main causes of conflict in urban areas are related to socio-economic conditions and the marginalisation and exclusion of particular groups. This reduces the role that military instruments can play in reducing conflict potentials in cities. There is however a role to play for the military in MACP, i.e. the police. The modalities that this could take have to be considered in the contexts where the boundaries between military action and policing are highly blurred, as the four cases in this study show.

## NOTES

- 1 United Nations 2014.
- 2 NATO 2016: 8; Breitenbauch et al. 2016: 35–51.
- 3 Breitenbauch et al. 2016: 1–2.
- 4 See for example Hills 2002; Kilcullen 2012; Breitenbauch et al. 2016. In 2015 in response to the challenges that urban environments pose to warfare, NATO commissioned the 'Urbanisation Conceptual Study'. It explores the future risks of urban armed conflict and discusses how military organisations can rethink and reorganise their modes of operating in cities. As part of these studies, NATO conducted two experiments (2015 and 2016), which focused on how to handle military-strategic and operational challenges in cities (NATO 2016; NATO 2017). The Centre for Military Studies (CMS) in Denmark also produced a report in 2016 for the Danish Minister of Defence on trends and challenges for urban military operations (Breitenbauch et al. 2016).
- 5 Kahlmeyer and Suni 2015; NATO 2017.
- 6 Breitenbauch et al. 2016.
- 7 Shearer et al. 2015: 19.
- 8 Shearer et al. 2015: 9; Kahlmeyer and Suni 2015.
- 9 NATO 2017: 7; (NATO na(a): 23).
- 10 Hills 2002.
- 11 Kahlmeyer and Suni 2015: 3, 17-18; NATO 2017: 14; NATO 2016: 8; Breitenbauch et al. 2016.
- 12 NATO na(b); Kahlmeyer and Suni 2015; NATO na(a).
- 13 See Beall et al. 2013.
- 14 Giustozzi 2009.
- 15 Beall et al. 2013.
- 16 Beall et al. 2013.
- 17 Haysom 2013.
- 18 See the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset, [www.acleddata.com/](http://www.acleddata.com/)
- 19 Beall et al. 2013.
- 20 Beall et al. 2013.
- 21 The Fragile Cities Index, including cities with more than 250,000 inhabitants. See <https://igarape.org.br/en/apps/fragile-cities-data-visualization/>
- 22 Government estimates 2015. Ministry of Planning, 'Somaliland in Figures 2016'. <http://slministryofplanning.org/images/Statistics/SomalilandInfigures2015.pdf> (accessed 20/09/2017)
- 23 Lebanon is particular in the sense that 87.8 per cent (2015 figure) of the total population is urban, see: [https://www.indexmundi.com/lebanon/demographics\\_profile.html](https://www.indexmundi.com/lebanon/demographics_profile.html)
- 24 This is an estimate for 2015–20, see: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html>
- 25 There is a total of 1.5 estimated Syrian refugees in Lebanon as a whole, see: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/settlement.php?id=202&country=122&region=88>.
- 26 More than 455,000 Palestinians are registered as refugees in Lebanon, but many live outside the country. UNWRA estimates that approx. 278,000 live in Lebanon. Data obtained from UNWRA Beirut office, September 2017.
- 27 This figure is from 2015: [http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migration\\_profile\\_kenya.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migration_profile_kenya.pdf)
- 28 UNHCR 2015 and interviews, Ministry of Interior, Hargeisa June 2017.
- 29 This figure is according to the 2014 census and accounts for those who moved to Yangon over the preceding five years (2009–2014). The figures are therefore likely higher in 2017.
- 30 Amnesty International 2009.
- 31 This figure is based on rough estimates made by city government authorities and international agencies (Forbes 2016; Myint 2017).

- 32 Vliet and Hourani 2014.
- 33 Sturge 2014: 4–5.
- 34 Dafe 2009.
- 35 Price et al. 2016: 6; IOM 2015: 93.
- 36 FAO and UNICEF 2005.
- 37 According to the UNHCR, there are 20,000 undocumented foreigners in Somaliland, while the government claims that the number is 80,000. According to the Ministry for Refugees, Rehabilitation and Reintegration there were 16,000 drought-displaced households in Hargeisa in 2016 (interview, June 2017).
- 38 Forbes 2016: 197.
- 39 Myint 2017.
- 40 Interview, International Organization for Migration, Yangon, January 2017.
- 41 Mourad 2017.
- 42 Andersen 2017.
- 43 Errighi and Griesse 2016.
- 44 Syrian refugees in Lebanon live in fear after Arsal. Thousands of refugees living near Arsal were sent back to Syria under a deal aimed at quelling border violence, Al-Jazeera, 27 August 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/08/syrian-refugees-lebanon-live-fear-arsal-170826083802752.html>
- 45 Lebanon: New Refugee Policy a Step Forward. Open the Door to Legal Status for All Syrian Refugees, Human Rights Watch, 14 February 2017.
- 46 "Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon", R.A.C.E. Ministry of Education and Higher Education June 2014; UNHCR Lebanon: Back to School, June 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/paper/lebanon/unhcr-lebanon-back-school>
- 47 "Growing Up Without an Education. Barriers to Education for Syrian Refugee Children in Lebanon". Human Rights Watch, 19 July 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/paper/2016/07/19/growing-without-education/barriers-education-syrian-refugee-children-lebanon>; Anderson 2016, "Syria's Refugee Children Have Lost All Hope: young Syrians living in Lebanon are attempting suicide in ever greater numbers", Foreign Policy, 29 June 2016.
- 48 Campbell 2006: 399.
- 49 Stanley 2015: 23.
- 50 Campbell 2006: 399.
- 51 Wilson 2014.
- 52 IPOA 2014.
- 53 Amnesty International 2014; IPOA 2014.
- 54 K'akumu and Olima 2007.
- 55 K'akumu and Olima 2007.
- 56 Dafe 2009: 14.
- 57 IOM 2015: 93.
- 58 Price et al 2016: 10.
- 59 IOM 2015: 93.
- 60 Drumtra 2014.
- 61 The Legal Aid Clinic at Hargeisa University has in some cases provided Ethiopians with safe houses and cash support.
- 62 Drumtra 2014.
- 63 Somaliland Internal Displacement Policy, MRR&R; interview MRR&R, Hargeisa, June 2017.
- 64 McPherson 2016.
- 65 Myint 2017.
- 66 See Coconuts Yangon, 12.06.2017; Reuters 12.06.2017.
- 67 Forbes 2016.
- 68 Schissler et al. 2017.

- 69 IOM 2015: 4-5.
- 70 Quote from BusinessNews.com.lb, <http://www.businessnews.com.lb/cms/Story/StoryDetails.aspx?ItemID=5996>
- 71 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2016. Lebanon is ranked 136 out of 176 states concerning corruption, [https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption\\_perceptions\\_index\\_2016](https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016). It is impossible to give exact figures for the percentage of the e.g. international donor money ending up in the pockets of the elites but the figure 40 percent is mentioned by many in Beirut, including diplomats who want to stay anonymous.
- 72 Andersen 2017.
- 73 Dix 2006.
- 74 IOM report 2015 – Kenya.
- 75 IOM report 2015 – Kenya: pp. 151.
- 76 Dix 2006: 9.
- 77 IOM report 2015 – Kenya: pp. 156.
- 78 Mogire and Agade 2011.
- 79 Interview, IOM representative, Yangon, 23.01.2017.
- 80 Interview, UN-Habitat, Yangon, 10.01.17.
- 81 Haysom 2013; Landau 2014.
- 82 Haysom 2013.
- 83 Based on personal interviews during field study in Beirut, spring 2017.
- 84 In Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2016 Lebanon is ranked 136 out of 176 states concerning corruption, [https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption\\_perceptions\\_index\\_2016](https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016)
- 85 According to the so-called ‘Egypt Agreement’.
- 86 As part of the new Constitution in 2010.
- 87 Adam 2013.
- 88 Forbes 2016: 200; Kraas et al. 2006; UN-Habitat 2010.
- 89 Also known as ‘consociational democracy’.
- 90 Except when they intervene in criminal affairs, with the assent of the Palestinian factions.
- 91 Numbers are unreliable. However existing surveys suggest that women consistently outnumber men in age groups between 20 and 34, most likely due to participation in the war in Syria, or in migration further afield (Errighi and Griesse 2016).
- 92 According to a decree from 2014.
- 93 See for example Madoré 2016.
- 94 Ibid.
- 95 There are some 50,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers in Nairobi.
- 96 Price et al 2016: 9.
- 97 Information for this section stems mainly from the profiling survey UNHCR 2015, as well as interviews in the State House settlement.
- 98 Kilcullen 2012 emphasises the transnational connectedness of marginal urban settlements, but this may not hold true in all cases.
- 99 The kind of civil anti-government movements that have emerged in Beirut, for instance, mainly comprise middle class Lebanese citizens rather than refugees. In Nairobi, despite the emergence of local vigilante groups in migrant communities, there is no evidence to suggest that newcomer rural migrants or refugees engage in the kinds of localised, ethnic-based violent conflict that has happened in Nairobi.
- 100 Danish Government 2017.
- 101 Beall et al. 2013, p.13.

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