



Road Traffic Accidents of Undocumented Immigrants Crossing Southeast Borders of Iran

Mohammad Khammarnia ^{1,*} and Fatemeh Setoodehzadeh ¹

¹Health Promotion Research Center, Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran

*Corresponding author: Department of Public Health, Zahedan University of Medical Sciences, Zahedan, Iran. Email: m_khammar1985@yahoo.com

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Dear Editor,

Illegal migration and movement frequently appear during socio-economic condition, war, and political pressure (1). This phenomenon is seen more in Asian countries, which host diverse cultures, economies, political systems, and settlement patterns (2). Also, migration from poor regions is increasing across Asia (3). Many migrants have an irregular status in their destination country, especially during crossing borders. In this regard, Palacio reported that undocumented immigrants face border fence-related injuries and motor vehicle accidents. This type of injury often requires surgical intervention and a longer hospital stay for severe injuries (4).

One of these migration flows is the illegal movement of foreign nationals from Afghanistan and Pakistan into Iran. The entry and residence of foreigners under unauthorized, displaced persons or refugees are one issue that has faced the Iranian government with many challenges (5). This phenomenon increases the number of road traffic accidents and the resulting deaths.

Sistan and Baluchistan province in southeast Iran has 1100 kilometers with Afghanistan and Pakistan (6). Smugglers and profiteers always abuse it due to its borders with the two countries. The political and social changes in Afghanistan in recent years have led to the arrival of more Afghan nationals to Iran and, as a result, increased

accidents on southeastern Iran roads.

The transfer of undocumented immigrants and the movement of vehicles carrying smuggled fuel are the main activities of smugglers in this region. These, as one of the important and influential factors in traffic accidents in this province, always cause concern for passengers and drivers of other vehicles (7). Since about 15 to 50 immigrants are riding in some cars carrying foreigners, casualties have increased in the event of an accident (Figures 1 and 2).

These accidents have caused Sistan and Baluchistan province to be recognized as the third province for road accidents in Iran.

According to reports expressed by health system managers in this province, annually more than \$555,000 was spent on treating foreign nationals in the region (2021 - 2022) (8) injured in road traffic accidents. The lack of insurance coverage and the inability of non-Iranian nationals to cover the costs of treatment have caused severe economic burdens to be imposed on hospitals and medical centers in southeast Iran.

In general, the movement of undocumented immigrants significantly impacts the public safety of the regions (9). On the other hand, an increased burden on healthcare workers is also one of the consequences of these accidents; therefore, immigration control and illegal traffic and border control can lead to reducing this burden.



Figure 1. Images of cars carrying foreigners after the accident



Figure 2. Images of cars carrying foreigners after the accident

Footnotes

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