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## ENVIRONMENTAL MIGRATION: ESSENCE, PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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*Climate change, desertification, high risks of water supplies and increasing droughts in irrigation networks of rivers and canals (Karakalpakiya, Aral); ethnic and linguistic barriers between titular nation and small nations (Kazakhs, Karakalpaks) in Uzbekistan, which hampers their internal migration and threatens assimilation within the country – all these reasons are not a survival strategy, but contribute to escape in search of asylum to other territories (Russia, Kazakhstan). There is a need to address the problem of environmental migration, therefore, the concept of an “environmental migrant”, an “environmental refugee” should be introduced into practice. Why is environmental migration as a problem requiring detailed study? This is a complex process, which has the same characteristics with a general migration of the population, but which has its own characteristics. An analysis of this process shows that, despite the obvious relevance and significance, the problems associated with it remain unresolved. Theoretical development of migration policy is interdisciplinary, therefore, political scientists, sociologists, lawyers, demographers, historians, psychologists are engaged in migration issues. The interdisciplinary approach will reveal the economic, political, ecological, psychological aspects of environmental migration will give an objective assessment of its condition, will identify the main areas of improvement in the field of right regulation, socio-psychological adaptation in migrant resettlement areas.*

**Keywords:** *Environmental refugee, environmental migrant, situation of asylum search.*

### Introduction

Why is environmental migration as a problem requiring detailed study from the general structure of population migration? This is a complex process with the defining one and the same sign, but different in features. An analysis of this process shows that despite the obvious relevance and significance, the problems associated with these processes remain unresolved. The theoretical development of migration policy is interdisciplinary, therefore, political scientists, sociologists, lawyers, demographers, historians, psychologists are engaged in migration issues. The interdisciplinary approach will reveal the economic, political, ecological, psychological aspects; allow giving an objective assessment of its condition, identifying the main areas of improvement in the field of right regulation, social and psychological adaptation in the places of their resettlement. The relevance of studying environmental migration as a special kind of population displacement caused by natural disasters is difficult to predict.

Environmental migration caused by natural disasters, hazards, etc. and their consequences have been little studied, there are no statistical data and results of sociological research. Earthquakes, floods, drought, forest fires take lives of people. There are

many crippled destinies of people – environmental refugees, migrants who were endangered by natural disasters, tragedies of Aral, Semipalatinsk, Chernobyl, Chelyabinsk, flood in Yakutia, volcanic eruptions, explosions in mines caused by technogenic processes are known. This is not a complete list of what is happening only in the territory of the post-Soviet space. The alarm today is caused by flooding of the territory of Great Britain, Holland, climate change in Eastern Europe. And this requires a joint study and development of a new approach to environmental migration. Where these people go, how their fates are formed. How do they live in a new environment, how are they called: refugees, illegal immigrants, migrants, etc. How is their status determined? The report of the Global Commission on International Migration has developed new categories of migrants, such as “environmental migrants” – people who were forced to relocate due to environmental disasters and “forced migrants” – those who were forced to move to their country of citizenship as a result of circumstances endangering their life.

### Environmental migration – problems and solutions

The materials on the migration problems of international organizations do not pay enough attention

to the individual assessment of the status of residents affected by disasters and hazards, limited to conducting seminars and collecting information on them. The recommendations do not reflect the ways of solving migration problems. The forced relocation of people from Karakalpakstan to Kazakhstan requires a differentiated approach to them. The identification of this category of "environmental migrants" from among other migrants returning to their historical homeland has prompted, first of all, the preservation of the life and health of children.

The absence of forms and methods of relocation from the disasters and hazards zone does not provide a real system for tracking environmental migrants. These events will periodically arise, causing serious changes in the stability of people. Are we ready to withstand to forces of nature? The task is to use the real possibilities of survival in these conditions with the least losses. The relevance of studying environmental migration as a special kind of population displacement caused by natural disasters is difficult to predict. Any state needs to take into account natural disasters. In the early 1990s, the President of Kazakhstan, N.A. Nazarbayev appealed to the Kazakhs living outside to return to their historical homeland. Resettlement programs in Kazakhstan in the early 1990s were actually implemented within the framework of the law "On migration". After the collapse of the USSR, the law played a huge role in resettling and settling in a new place many people who came from far and near abroad. Annually, the Presidential Decree allocates a quota of immigration, which involves the allocation of funds for the number of families that have arrived. Migration programs are of a general nature, they are not supported by enforcement mechanisms, which allows migrant service executives to implement them in accordance with their perception of the benefits. Measures taken at the governmental level leave migration uncontrolled, not predictably influencing the socioeconomic situation of the republic. The proposed scientific developments, recommendations and proposals do not find practical application.

Impoverishment of a separate part of environmental migrants, unemployment without housing, and inaccessibility to loans causes a natural protest from migrants, as evidenced by the events of Shanyrak city of Almaty. It is a constant hotbed of tension and social conflict within one nationality, and not an interethnic conflict and is not always taken into account by state bodies. The first resettlement associations emerged, whose main goal was to confront bureaucracy and uphold minimal economic and social rights. In the changed conditions, the focus of migration policy

shifted from the problems of environmental migration to the problems of economic migration. Migration losses exceed the natural increase in population.

Shallowing of the Aral Sea in the delta of the Amu Darya has led to a sharp deterioration of the ecological situation, desertification and salinization of soils, which really threatens the health of the population living in this area. There was a hope turning a part of the runoff of the Siberian Rivers, which is nowhere. But how much money was invested in research? This factor forced many people to legally and illegally migrate to more prosperous places, primarily to Kazakhstan and Russia. Over the past fifteen years, more than 450,000 people, mainly ethnic Kazakhs, have moved from the Uzbek part of the Aral Sea to Kyrgyz republic. And this process has acquired a massive, landslide character, which cannot be accounted for and controlled. The deterioration of the ecological situation leads to economic losses and a decline in the standard of living. The process of land development, the pursuit of a high yield led to irreversible processes.

The situation is exacerbated by the lack and terrifying quality of drinking water. As is known, the shallowing of the Aral Sea in the Amu Darya delta has led to a sharp deterioration in the ecological situation, desertification, salinization of the soil and poses a serious threat to the lives of people inhabiting the territory. Lack of drinking water and poor quality increased the risk of morbidity in the population. There have been changes in climatic conditions. A significant part of these people, not finding an opportunity for not just a decent life, but also survival in their country, were forced to legally and illegally migrate to more prosperous places, primarily in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.

Despite the generally accepted opinion that there is a water deficit in this region, in fact most of the problems are caused by an overabundance of water. Old methods of irrigation require the presence of artificial reservoirs, where "excess" water flows from the canals. 90 percent of the channels are not lined with waterproof material. Watering crops is carried out simply by flooding the fields. All this led to an increase in the level of groundwater, which transport salts to the soil surface and salinize these soils. Saline soil requires washing with fresh water, drainage water after rinsing flows mainly to other water bodies around the fields. The vicious circle closes. The Aral Sea has moved to the upper and middle reaches of the Amudarya and Syr Darya rivers and is located here in the form of tens of thousands of artificial reservoirs

of various sizes. Such a movement of huge masses of water caused local climate change. The number of landslides and mudflows in the mountains increased, rains began to rain more often in winter, and dust storms became more frequent. Dimensions of glaciers of the Pamir and Tien Shan are decreasing. There is a real shortage of fresh water in Central Asia.

#### **Humanitarian assistance**

The activities of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea are focused mainly on the Kyzylorda region of Kazakhstan and as a whole did not meet the expectations of the population for improving the life of the population of the Uzbek part of the Aral Sea. The allocated funds from international organizations to improve the drainage system in Nukus have not improved the quality of drinking water. Restoring the Aral Sea is a long and expensive process. It is time to save the lives of people living in the Aral Sea region, and there are about 900 thousand of them. These are, in general, the main factors and trends in the process of migration of the population from the ecologically extremely unsuccessful region of the Uzbek zone of the Aral Sea to Kazakhstan. Restoration of the southern part of the Aral Sea is a long and expensive process. It is time to save the lives of people living in this territory, and there are more than a million people who are forced to relocate while saving their lives and their descendants. Environmental migration is one of the most important factors in the migration of the population of the Aral Sea area. Where to go, who is waiting for them? Making sure that the Aral no longer saved, decided to save people.

Environmental migrants faced a number of problems, and first of all, with the lack of their rights, a sense of abandonment and uselessness, many families, mostly families, needed social and psychological

adaptation. There is a need to organize such a public organization where they could obtain the necessary information. This flow should be separated from the general flow of Kazakhs from Mongolia, China, Turkey, Iran, etc., their reception, adaptation and arrangement. All this fell on the shoulders of the small organization of the Public Foundation “Center for Support of Environmental Migrants of Uzbekistan”. This gap can be compensated by the allocation of funds and legal authority to work with environmental migrants. Without a clear vertical system, this problem cannot be resolved at the level of a public organization. Many ministries deal with migrants, but so far no programs have been developed for their social adaptation, and educational work.

#### **Conclusion**

In this regard, it seems essential: – inclusion of the definition of “environmental migrant” – people forced to move beyond, because of “ecological thunderstorms of life and health, due to disasters and catastrophes” into the law on migration; – conducting a real, comprehensive republican study on environmental migrants, with the task of developing a national migration program; – on the basis of the conducted research, to develop mechanisms for implementing the program and for monitoring by public organizations for its implementation, including training programs for specialists in the social and psychological profile in the field of migration; – improvement of the work of state structures with the inclusion of the Ministry of Emergencies involved in environmental migration, organized resettlement and compact resettlement, taking into account the mentality and psychology of people who historically live in difficult times with their community.