

'Draconian border policies' embolden human trafficking networks, expert says

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European Union and southeast Asian countries are struggling to develop policies on how to deal with [large numbers of migrants](#) fleeing unstable states like Syria, Libya, Niger, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Advocates of stricter [migration](#) controls have said political steps should focus on punishing traffickers. However, the response aimed at traffickers can often lead to harsh conditions for migrants, such as the thousands of people stranded on boats for weeks in the Bay of Bengal after suspected traffickers abandoned them.

A University of Kansas expert is available to discuss issues surrounding global migration policy.

Nazli Avdan, assistant professor of political science, has researched [human trafficking](#) and the unintended consequences of [border controls](#). Her broad research focus includes international migration and international relations. She has published articles in the Journal of Public Policy, Journal of Conflict Resolution and European Union Politics about issues surrounding border controls and how countries control their own visa processes, human [trafficking](#) and how asylum recognition rates in Europe respond to terrorism.

"Draconian border policies have the unintended and deleterious effect of emboldening trafficking networks. It is precisely the vulnerable segments that are unable to secure legitimate access to the developed world that fall prey to trafficking networks," Avdan said.

She added that focusing on criminalization of trafficking is like treating a symptom instead of the real problems, which are the root causes of migration.

"Instead, it strengthens the black market—augmenting illicit flows, and possibly drives up the price of the services provided by smuggling networks," she said. "Politicians have justified their response as 'trafficking causing' migration, which is erroneous. Instead, trafficking responds to underlying demand—that is what migration scholarship refers to as 'push' conditions: persecution; political instability; state repression and economic hardship."

Provided by University of Kansas

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