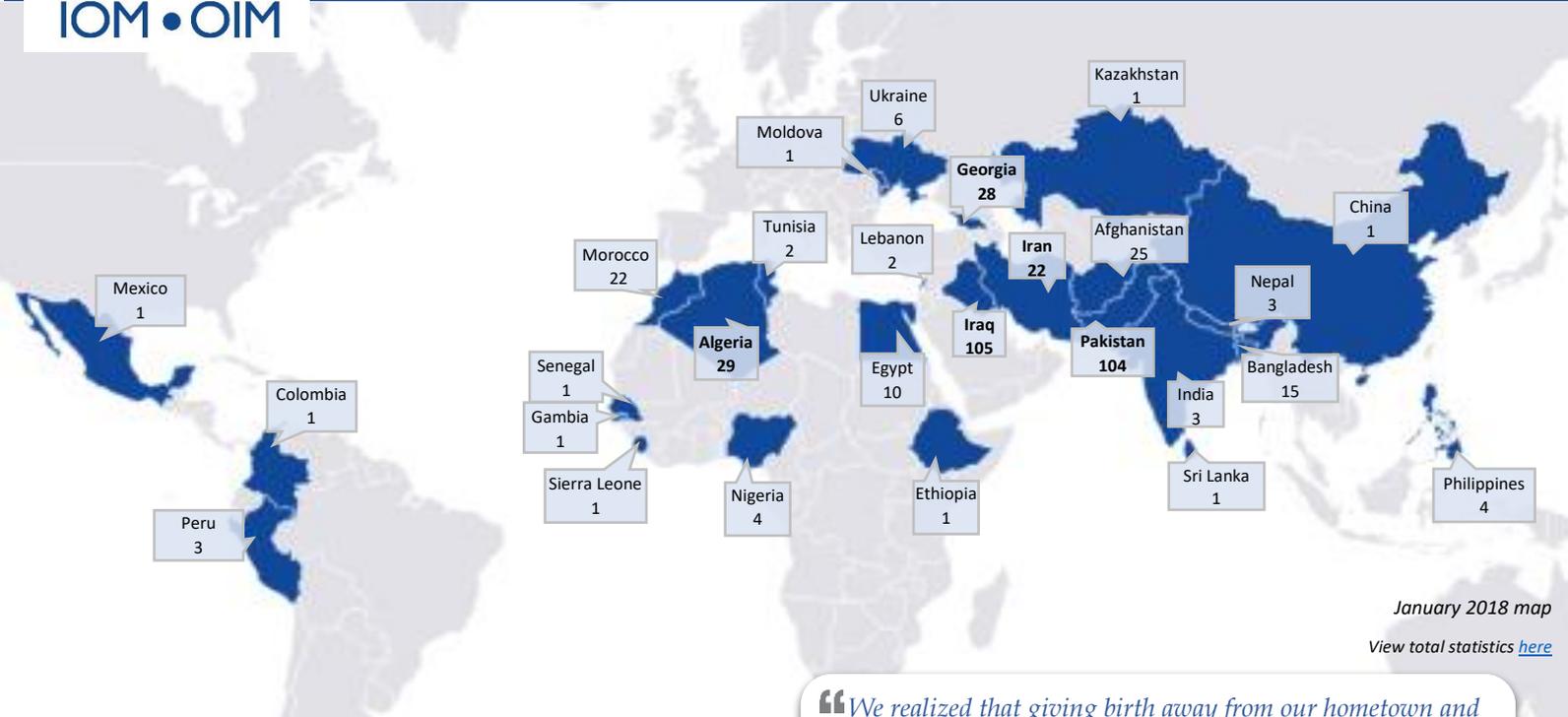




# THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURNS INCLUDING REINTEGRATION MEASURES (AVRR)

IOM-Office in Greece

**41,081**  
Voluntary Returns  
**2,992**  
Reintegration Plans



January 2018 map  
View total statistics [here](#)

## JANUARY 2018

“We realized that giving birth away from our hometown and our family was not a wise decision. So we decided to return to our home, but this time in a safe and organized way.”

- Azad Shirwan Mohamed

## 68 BENEFICIARIES RECEIVED

### REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE IN KIND

- DAIRY FARMS
- MINI MARKET
- CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

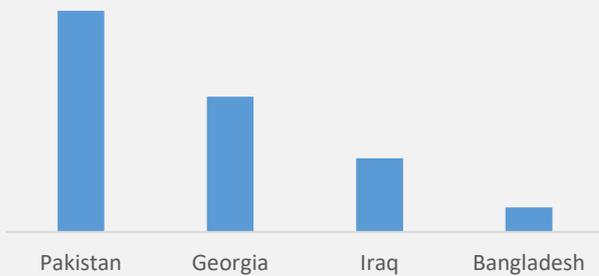


## 397 BENEFICIARIES RETURNED HOME

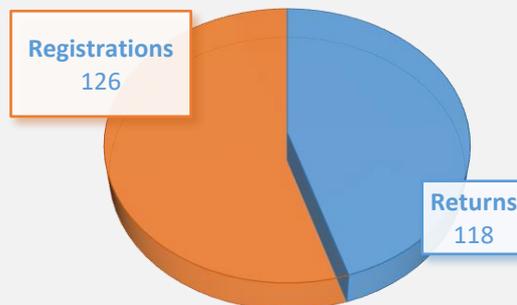
via **82** COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS



### TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



### AVRR FIGURES FROM THE ISLANDS & CRETE



**326** MEN

**46** WOMEN

**23** CHILDREN

**40** MEDICAL CASES

### NUMBERS IN TOTAL

**41,081** returns  
from 2010 up to January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018

**9,486** returns  
from June 2016 up to January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018

**2,369** reintegration plans in kind  
**623** reintegration plans in cash  
from June 2016 up to January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018



The project is co-funded 75% by European Funds (Asylum Migration and Integration Fund) and 25% by National Funds



## Voices of Returnees

### A couple from Kenya



Alfred, Immaculata and their baby boy

Alfred and Immaculata are a couple from Kenya who have been living in Greece for a number of years now. The financial crisis that has hit Greece since 2009 and the high unemployment rates means that finding a job got more and more difficult for economic migrants and locals alike. After the arrival of their baby boy, only a few months ago, the couple decided to apply for AVRR programme, implemented by IOM Greece.

“My sister used to live in Greece, she’s a nun, and through her I learnt many things about the country and I decided to settle in Athens about 5 years ago”, says Immaculata. “I came here in Greece hoping to get a job and provide for my family back to Kenya. I thought it would be different from Africa, a change for the best. So, I left my son with my mother and moved here. It took me more than a year to finally get a job as a live-in nanny”.

“I used to be a lorry driver in Nairobi, for a transport company. When I arrived here, I found a job in Mykonos, in a hotel. It was a good place. I’d welcome the guests, take them to the airport and occasionally guide them around” says Alfred. “But, things are becoming harder and harder in Greece. We have to pay for all sorts of things but we cannot get a job, the stability that we need. Even buying basic items is a problem”.

“It’s not easy with the baby, I cannot stay with him because I have to work in a live-in job. But how can I leave my baby to go and live with another family? He’s really young and he needs me. I have to breastfeed him. I have no family here to help me and I cannot afford a babysitter. My older boy in Kenya needs me, too. My mother takes care of him but he feels lonely, he often tells me ‘I’m not happy, I want you to come home’. He’s 17 now”, Immaculata explains.

“So, we have decided to go back to Kenya”, Alfred continues. “We found out about the AVRR programme through some acquaintances and so we are here today, waiting for the moment to take the plane back to our homeland”.

“However, other members of my family cannot believe we want to go back, they say ‘no, stay there, don’t come back to Kenya’. But, when one lives in Africa, even when told that the situation in Greece is not good, they don’t seem to understand it. They don’t have the first-hand experience, they cannot compare. Many of our Greek friends are also suffering under the financial crisis, some of them are planning to migrate to America”.

“We will be given some assistance by IOM to start again in Kenya, so I hope to buy a used pick-up truck and start my own transport business, be independent and provide for Immaculata and the boys. And it’s always nice to be home” says Alfred, smiling.

## Voices of returnees

A family opens a new mini - market in Iraq



Azad, Helen and Pelin - Iraq

“My name is Azad Shirwan Mohamed and I have a little daughter called Pelin. She is three years old. We arrived in Greece with my wife Helen, 5 months ago. We left our hometown, Erbil in Iraq, looking for a better job and a higher income. Back home, we were running a small family business, a mini market, but from the moment we could not afford supporting our little store, we shut it down. Meanwhile, my wife got pregnant and things got more complicated.

Our journey to Europe was not easy. We were travelling for months and we arrived in Greece through Turkey. We applied for asylum, but it proved to be a time – consuming procedure for us; my wife was already seven months pregnant. We realized that giving birth away from our hometown and our family was not a wise decision. So we decided to return to our home, but this time in a safe and organized way.

We found out about IOM voluntary return programmes from a friend. So, we visited IOM premises in Athens and upon referral we were provided with a reintegration counseling session discussing about our options. Since we had an experience in running our small business, we agreed with IOM reintegration counselor to restart our new business back home. Thanks to reintegration programme, we are now able to open a new mini – market and pay part of our rent. Our first expenses will be covered by IOM. I have realized that returning to Iraq won't be a piece of cake. But through IOM's assistance we are looking forward to opening our new small business; we are looking forward to starting our new life and welcoming our baby. Furthermore, my wife who is giving birth in a few weeks, will have the sincere support of our families who are waiting for us back home.”