

## **Protecting people: How liberal democracies impact the number of dead and missing migrants**

By the end of 2018, 70.8 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide, according to the UNHCR. This growing problem, perpetrated through persecution of peoples for religion, race, gender or otherwise, is understudied in the field of political science. The present research aims to understand why migrants go dead or missing on some countries, but not others. I argue that tenets associated with liberal democracy, such as constitutionally protected civil liberties, strong rule of law, an independent judiciary, and effective checks and balances, help explain this variation. In addition, I posit that this relationship is conditioned by whether a country is a signatory of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

I test these expectations by building a global time-series cross-sectional dataset that captures both the regime type and number of dead and missing migrants within each country. The reveals that while migrants most often go missing or die near international borders, regime type and participation in the 1951 Convention significantly explain variation in the number of dead and missing. As the tenets of liberal democracies increase in a country, fewer migrants go missing or die in the country. This finding is robust across model specifications and measures of regime type.

This is also the first global look at how countries react to migrant inflows, which deserves more understanding in the current global climate. This research is the first in the field to begin explaining why migrants go dead and missing on their way to another country. Further research will be needed pertaining to other aspects of government that affect how much protections migrants are afforded.