



## **Bi-Weekly Press Briefing Insufficient Access to COVID-19 Vaccines for Migrants IOM - WHO 17 December 2021**

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### **Shotlist**

1. Exterior wide shot, United Nations flags flying.
2. Medium-wide shot, inside the press conference room (B-128), showing the participants and a cameraman filming the press briefing.
3. **SOUNDBITE (English): Jacqueline Weekers, Director of IOM's Migration Health Division: "Equitable access to health services remains insufficient, and stigma, discrimination against migrants widespread - as evidenced by the media reports following discovery of the Omicron variant."**
4. Close shot of the TV screen showing the press briefing broadcast on Zoom.
5. **SOUNDBITE (English): Jacqueline Weekers, Director of IOM's Migration Health Division: "As I speak, millions of asylum seekers, forcibly displaced families and migrant workers are cut-off from reliable health coverage. Millions of migrants in irregular situations face arrest or deportation when seeking health care due to the absence of viable immigration authorities."**
6. Medium shot, journalists taking notes and a cameraman attending the press conference.
7. **SOUNDBITE (English): Jacqueline Weekers, Director of IOM's Migration Health Division: "According to IOM's analysis of 180 countries, migrants in irregular situations cannot get the COVID-19 jab in at least 45 countries, now out of 46 access remains unclear."**
8. Close shot of the TV screen showing a speaker and the presenter on the right, masked, listening to the speech.

9. **SOUNDBITE (English): Jacqueline Weekers, Director of IOM's Migration Health Division:**  
**“COVID-19 is likely to hold two decades of global progress towards universal health coverage. We are already witnessing concerning regression in our fights against other deadly diseases like tuberculosis, HIV and measles especially in marginalized and hard-to-reach communities.”**
10. Medium shot, journalists, seated and masked attending the meeting.
11. **SOUNDBITE (English): Santino Severoni, Director of WHO's Health and Migration Program:**  
**“Today, one out of thirty people are migrants, one out of ninety-five are forcibly displaced. In other words, we are considering, we are concerned about roughly one billion people between migrants, refugees, irregular migrants and IDPs which may be failing out of the access to health systems.”**
12. Close shot of participant.
13. **SOUNDBITE (English): Santino Severoni, Director of WHO's Health and Migration Program:**  
**“Despite we see, we foresee, the topic to be on top of the political agenda of all member states, still refugees, asylum seekers, state-less people, IDPs, migrants especially those in irregular conditions, tend to be excluded from the access to health systems due to lack of inclusive policies, barriers of the systems including languages, or issues related to availability of needed documentation or issues related to cover the costs for accessing those services.”**
14. Close shot, journalists taking notes.
15. Close shot, a participant attending the meeting.
16. Close shot, a participant, masked, listening to the press briefing

## Story

Ahead of International Migrants Day (December 18), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) urgently called on governments and health providers for better access to Covid-19 vaccines for migrants two years into the pandemic.

**“Equitable access to health services remains insufficient, and stigma, discrimination against migrants widespread - as evidenced by the media reports following discovery of the Omicron variant”**, said Jacqueline Weekers, Director of IOM’s Migration Health Division at today’s press briefing at the United Nations in Geneva.

**“As I speak, millions of asylum seekers, forcibly displaced families and migrant workers are cut-off from reliable health coverage. Millions of migrants in irregular situations face arrest or deportation when seeking health care due to the absence of viable immigration authorities”**, Ms Weekers added.

Vaccine hesitancy in migrant communities must be address with specific, tailored interventions. However, the majority of migrants, Ms Weekers stressed, do want access to Coiv-19 immunization but cannot get to them because of administrative, logistical, geographic, cultural, linguistic or financial barriers.

**“According to IOM’s analysis of 180 countries, migrants in irregular situations cannot get the COVID-19 jab in at least 45 countries, now out of 46 access remains unclear”**, said IOM’s Ms Weekers.

Prior to the pandemic, WHO and the World Bank noted more than half a billion people were pushed into extreme poverty because of out-of-pocket health costs.

**“COVID-19 is likely to hold two decades of global progress towards universal health coverage”**, assumed Ms Weekers. She added that **“we are already witnessing concerning regression in our fights against other deadly diseases like tuberculosis, HIV and measles especially in marginalized and hard-to-reach communities.”**

On the occasion of International Migrants Day, the World Health Organisation pointed out how many people on the move might fall between the cracks of health care systems worldwide.

**“Today, one out of thirty people are migrants, one out of ninety-five are forcibly displaced. In other words, we are considering, we are concerned about roughly one billion people between migrants, refugees, irregular migrants and IDPs which may be failing out of the access to health systems”**, said Santino Severoni, Director of WHO’s Health and Migration Program.

Health is a fundamental human right for everyone, stressed WHO’s Mr Severoni. **“Despite we see, we foresee, the topic to be on top of the political agenda of all member states, still refugees, asylum seekers, state-less people, IDPs, migrants especially those in irregular conditions, tend to be excluded from the access to health systems due to lack of inclusive policies, barriers of the systems including languages, or issues related to availability of needed documentation or issues related to cover the costs for accessing those services.”**

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