

# Millions making plans to leave Africa for Europe, US: Report

## Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya, the biggest sources of migrants

**NEW YORK:** Nearly 1.5 million people have left sub-Saharan Africa for Europe and the United States since 2010, while millions more are making plans to follow in their footsteps, researchers said yesterday. Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya were the biggest sources of migrants to Europe and the United States among the dozens of nations south of the Sahara, according to the Pew Research Center, a polling and demographic research group in Washington.

The large-scale movement of people out of sub-Saharan Africa has grown steadily nearly every year since 2010, the Pew study said. Global migration overall has strained resources

in host countries that are struggling to shoulder the costs. In some places, migration has fueled political tensions and calls for the closing of borders. Migrants, meanwhile, leave homelands that offer few job prospects, low wages and the dangers of conflict, political instability and modern day slavery, the study said.

Millions more people from the Sub-Saharan region indicated that they would leave if they could, according to Pew findings from six countries.

"The survey results do indicate a certain restlessness among people who want to leave their countries or plan to in the next years,"

Phillip Connor, senior researcher of the report, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. But not all of those will necessarily follow through and move, he added.

More than a third of people surveyed in Senegal, Ghana and Nigeria said they had actual plans to move in the next five years, according to the report.

Nearly 2 million residents of Ghana - 6 percent of its population - applied for a US diversity lottery in 2015, it said. Restricted to 50,000 people worldwide, the lottery also drew strong interest in the Republic of Congo, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Europe saw an influx of at least 1 million people from sub-Saharan Africa, most of whom headed to the United Kingdom, followed by France, the report said. Most were asylum applicants. More than 400,000 sub-Saharan migrants went to the United States, according to the report.

Pew used data from Eurostat, a European statistical agency, the US Department of Homeland Security, the US State Department, and its own polling. Many more people - nearly 5 million - have moved to other sub-Saharan countries since 2010, mostly as refugees, the report said. — Reuters

## FBI reminds couriers on suspicious package protocols

**HOUSTON:** The FBI has reminded parcel delivery companies in the United States to follow "established protocols" for handling suspicious packages following a bomb blast at a FedEx Corp sorting facility in Texas, an agency spokeswoman said on Wednesday.

A three-week bombing spree, which sent a shiver through the Texas capital of Austin and rattled the rest of the country, raised fears about the possibility of other attackers via package delivery.

"In light of the bombings in Austin the FBI has reached out to our private-sector partners to remind them of established protocols of how to handle suspicious packages," Federal Bureau of Investigation spokeswoman Lindsay Ram said by email. There was no suggestion by the FBI that FedEx had not followed protocols to the letter. Federal prosecutors said on Wednesday they had charged Mark Conditt of Pflugerville, Texas, with unlawful possession and transfer of a destructive device before he blew himself up as police closed in on his vehicle.

FedEx, United Parcel Service Inc and other couriers collect a vast amount of data on packages in their systems. Some of the information may have helped identify the man who carried out the bombings, a FedEx executive said. FedEx Chief Operations Officer David Bronczek told employees in an internal memo seen by Reuters that the company provided "key evidence" to law enforcement officials on identifying the suspect.

The FBI's Ram did not elaborate on



**PFLUGERVILLE, TX:** FBI agent Christopher Combs addresses members of the media about suspected Austin bomber Mark Anthony Conditt on Wednesday in Pflugerville, Texas. — AFP

whether the agency was concerned about other deadly packages that may have slipped into a mail network that handles roughly 40 million parcels daily in the United States. FedEx was taking the extraordinary step of screening every package at the sorting facility outside Austin where a parcel bomb exploded on a conveyor belt on Tuesday. It was also x-raying entire trailers filled with packages at that location and other trailers with packages originating from central Texas, a FedEx manager said.

FedEx spokesman Jim McCluskey declined to comment on package screening and on the evidence FedEx provided authorities. Like FedEx, UPS shipping terms and conditions allow employees to open and inspect packages, and the companies train employees on how to respond if they see packages that look suspicious or may contain drugs.

FedEx and UPS have so far not described steps they may take to expand screening.

UPS spokesman Glenn Zaccara said the company constantly evaluates and adjusts

its security measures, but does not discuss them in order to maintain their effectiveness. The United States Postal Service said in a statement that although it appeared none of the devices in Austin were sent through the U.S. mail, USPS reminded employees and customers to be observant about suspicious packages.

Inspectors in its Dangerous Mail Investigations Program "are trained to recognize the common characteristics of suspicious mail and are highly proficient in the use of state-of-the-art equipment to include portable X-ray machines," the USPS said. The FedEx manager said inbound international shipments are screened by x-ray or bomb-sniffing dogs, and said the Texas blast could lead to changes in domestic security screening. Airport-like security measures inside package sorting facilities and retail locations would be a costly and unnecessary step that would paralyze operations, particularly given the rarity of package bombs, said Satish Jindel, a founder of the delivery company that became FedEx Ground. — Reuters

## Peru prosecutors seek to bar toppled president from leaving country

**LIMA:** Anti-graft prosecutors in Peru on Wednesday asked a judge to bar President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski from leaving the South American country hours after he announced his resignation in the face of near-certain impeachment, a judiciary source told Reuters.

Kuczynski, a 79-year-old former Wall Street banker who once held US citizenship, is guaranteed presidential immunity from prosecution until Congress formally accepts his resignation and Vice President Martin Vizcarra is sworn in to replace him. Luis Galarreta, the president of Congress, said that would probably happen today. Kuczynski denies wrongdoing and has promised to cooperate with a graft probe into his connections to Odebrecht, a Brazilian construction company that has acknowledged bribing officials across Latin America.

The rightwing opposition party that controls Congress, Popular Force, first sought to force Kuczynski from office in December after revealing he failed to disclose payments Odebrecht made to his Florida-based consulting firm while he held public office in a previous government.

Kuczynski had vowed not to resign for months, blaming the rightwing opposition for constant scandals that he said had made it impossible for him to govern Peru, one of Latin America's most stable markets and the world's No. 2 producer of copper.

But secret audio and video recordings released this week ensnared Kuczynski in vote-buying allegations that prompted even his staunchest supporters to demand he step down.

Kuczynski said the material, in which his allies are heard offering access to lucrative public work contracts in exchange for political support, had been edited as part of a relentless campaign to malign him.

But the hostile political climate had become untenable, he added. "I think what's best for the country is for me to resign...I don't want to be an obstacle for the nation's search for a path to unity and harmony," Kuczynski said in a pre-recorded video televised as he was driven from the presidential palace to his home in Lima's financial district. — Reuters