The International Organisation for Migration

Saving Lives

&

Countering Migrant Smuggling

A Comprehensive Approach to Counter Migrant Smuggling

High Level Meeting to Address Unsafe Mixed Migration by Sea
As the leading international organization for migration, IOM addresses the migratory phenomenon from an integrated and holistic perspective.

IOM works on the full range of migration related issues, covering policy, capacity building in migration governance, direct assistance to migrants, and emergency humanitarian response.
IOM acts closely with its partners in the international community (with governments, other intergovernmental organizations, civil society and the private sector) in order to:

- Assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management
- Advance understanding of migration issues
- Encourage social and economic development through migration
- Uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants

2014 overall budget: 1.5 billion USD
Staff (January 2015): 9000
IOM contributes to migration governance among other things by assisting states, working with partners and acting directly to support the development and application of migration and related law and policy that:

1. Adheres to international standards and fulfils migrants’ rights;
2. Supports policy-making that uses evidence and a whole-of-government approach;
3. Uses partnerships to address migration and related issues;

And seeks to

4. Advance the socio-economic well-being of migrants and society;
5. Respond effectively to the mobility dimensions of crises; and,
6. Provide safe and regular access to available migration channels.
The scene

Unprecedented human mobility and forced migration

A global phenomenon driven, first and foremost, by demography.

Today, one in every seven persons is a migrant.
The scene

Human beings with rights / Merchants of death*

- More concerted action by the international community to save lives and to counter migrant smuggling.
- Greater action to identify and prosecute smugglers and others who prey on desperate.

“What’s happening now is worse than a tragedy – it is a crime – one as bad as any I have seen in fifty years of service,” the IOM DG on February 11, 2015.

* As described by the Italian Minister of Interior and echoed by the IOM DG
The scene

Saving lives is top priority

- Need to focus on identifying concrete and practical solutions, comprehensive search and rescue operations and to enhance international cooperation
- Start opening significant additional legal migration channels, including for labour migrants
- Provide safe avenues for those seeking international protection
- Provide immediate practical protection
With a count surpassing 40,000 deaths since the year 2000, IOM calls on all governments to address what IOM describes as “an epidemic of crime and victimization.”*

*Fatal Journeys* presents the first global estimates of migrant deaths

The Mediterranean area has the highest number of deaths.
The identification of migrants who die during their journeys remains a key challenge.

The international dimension of migration, the irregular status of the vast majority of those who die and of surviving family members, and the lack of clarity around responsibility for identification and tracing all create additional challenges for effective identification, meaning that countless families are left without knowing the fate of their loved ones.
Article 2 (Statement of purpose) of the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol combines preventing and combating the smuggling of migrants with protecting the rights of smuggled migrants.

This is further supported by Article 16 which calls upon States to take appropriate measures in accordance with their obligations under international law "to preserve and protect the rights of persons who have been the object of conduct set forth in article 6".
Many smuggled migrants are often misled and deceived. They are vulnerable to multiple risks, including those related to having contact with criminal organizations, threats to their safety, health, dignity, legal and human rights.

IOM has the capacity to lead on the provision of practical protection to smuggled migrants, which can include assistance with immediate needs, identification and screening processes, health services, psychosocial support and assisted voluntary return and reintegration.
The reasons

Contemporary migratory movements continue to be marked by ever growing scale, complexity and risk against the backdrop of:

- political instability or upheaval, outbreak of armed conflict,
- political oppression, social exclusion of certain populations as well as modern communication and transportation systems
- also growing economic integration within and across regions
- coupled with wealth disparities between countries.
Address the "drivers’ and root causes" of "desperation migration"

The migration challenges the world faces today and is likely to face for decades to come require radically different approaches from those that have been employed in the past.

The nature of these flows demands solutions that will only be possible if there is institutionalised engagement and cooperation between multiple stakeholders.

“There are so many push factors that there is no need to worry about pull factors” the IOM DG on November 19, 2014

It is hard to recall anytime in living memory where there were so many complex humanitarian emergencies that were pushing more and more people to engage in what could best be described as “desperation migration”.
IOM Director General in his Report to the 105th session of the Council on November 2014:

Migrant smuggling is a challenge to the integrity of international borders and national management systems. It is also a process that threatens the lives and well-being of migrants.

IOM will continue to work with its partners to promote opportunities to migrate in a safe and dignified manner, to address the root causes of “desperation migration”, to raise migrants’ awareness about the risks of embarking on smuggling routes, as well as well to support evidence-based advocacy, policy development and programming.

The Director General has committed to reporting to Member States at the 2015 IOM Council on progress.
Smuggling of migrants on land and sea is a global phenomenon characterized by large-scale suffering and deaths of migrants and high profits for transnational criminal networks, while states face challenges in preserving the integrity of their migration governance systems and sovereign borders, as well as fulfilling their responsibilities to protect individuals' human rights.

IOM calls for greater action to identify and prosecute smugglers and their associates in crime who prey on desperate migrants.
“The loss of over 5,000 lives on land and at sea in 2014 constitutes an humanitarian emergency – one which remains hidden in plain sight” the IOM DG on February 3, 2015

The situation is only going to get worse. This is the beginning of the summer season, when we may see an increase in movement across the Mediterranean.

In the immediate term, IOM calls for a dedicated effort to support search and rescue operations.
IOM is concerned about the end of 
*Mare Norstrum*, and the current resources allocated for saving lives in the Mediterranean are not sufficient to deal with the traffic we anticipate over the summer months.

There is **urgent need** for a greater commitment and concerted action of the international community to support search and rescue operations to save lives and to counter migrant smuggling.
A Comprehensive Approach to Save Lives and Counter Migrant Smuggling

IOM seeks concrete, **practical solutions** to the stunning loss of life as a result of sea journeys around the globe, whether in the Mediterranean, the Gulf of Aden, Bay of Bengal, or in the Caribbean.

IOM calls for countries, not only in Europe, to start **opening significant additional legal migration channels**, including for labour migrants and to **facilitate family reunification** as well as **more resettlement opportunities** and **larger resettlement quotas**.

IOM also seeks **durable solutions** for communities experiencing poverty and hopelessness and which are therefore prone to high outward migration pressure, especially developing opportunities as regards the youth.
Thank You!

Berlan Pars ALAN
Senior Migration Management Policy Advisor
(Counter Migrant Smuggling Contact Person)
Department of Migration Management
International Organization for Migration