



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
 Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations (OIM)
 Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM)

Press Briefing Notes

Friday 5 February

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1. **Mediterranean Migrant Deaths Reach 374; Arrivals in Greece Top 68,000 in 2016**
2. **IOM DG Attends London Pledging Conference for Syria and the Region**
3. **IOM: Migrants Must Be Included in Zika Virus Response Plans**
4. **IOM Organizes First Syrian Refugee Flight from Egypt to Canada**
5. **Malian Migrants Stranded in Libya Fly Home**
6. **IOM Guinea Supports Psychosocial, Socioeconomic Recovery of Ebola Survivors**
7. **Donkey Carts Build Resilience in Southern Somalia**
8. **IOM Tracks New Displacement in Burundi**
9. **CAR Communities Brought Together by IOM-Backed Theatre, Dance Events**

Mediterranean Migrant Deaths Reach 374; Arrivals in Greece Top 68,000 in 2016 – IOM estimates that Mediterranean migrant and refugee arrivals in Italy and Greece reached 74,676 through February 4th.

The first four days of February saw 7,483 arrivals—surpassing the 6,834 recorded for the entire month of February in 2015.

MEDITERRANEAN DEVELOPMENTS

Arrivals by sea and deaths

Country	1 Jan-4 Feb 2016		1 Jan-28 Feb 2015	
	Arrivals	Deaths	Arrivals	Deaths
Italy	5,898*	90 (<i>Central Med route</i>)	7,882	428 (includes all Med. Routes)
Greece	68,778*	284 (<i>Eastern Med route</i>)	3,952	
ESTIMATED TOTAL*	74,676	374	11,834	428

Arrivals by sea and deaths - 2015

Country of arrival	Arrivals	Deaths
Greece	853,650*	806 (<i>Eastern Med route</i>)
Cyprus	269	
Italy	153,842*	2,892 (<i>Central Med route</i>)
Malta	106	
Spain	3,845	72 (<i>Western Med and Western African routes</i>)
ESTIMATED TOTAL	1,011,712	3,770

*Data for Greece is sourced from IOM Greece staff and the Greek authorities.

More information: www.iom.int - Facebook.com/iommigration

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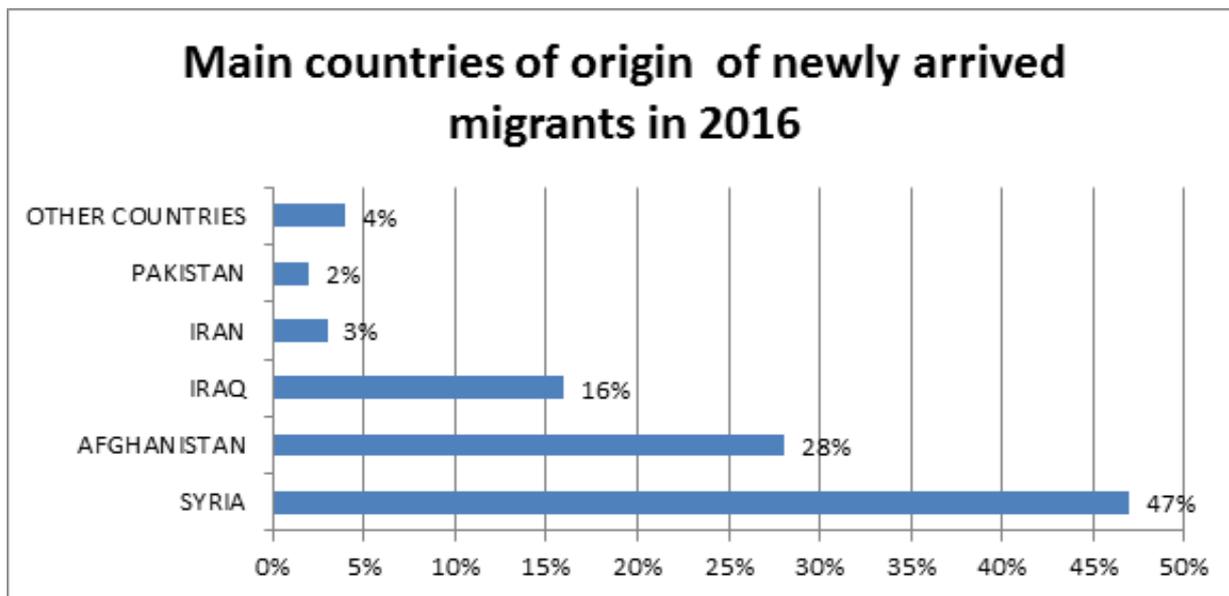
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**Data for Italy as of 31 December 2015 is sourced from the Italian Ministry of Interior.*

Since the beginning of 2016, IOM estimates that 68,778 migrants and refugees have reached the Greek islands. Of these roughly 44 % were men, 22 % women and 34 % children.

Due to a ferry strike in late January, many were stranded for days on several islands. Once ferries resumed operations, an estimated 14,785 migrants and refugees arrived at the mainland ports of Piraeus and Kavala between February 1st – February 4th.

ARRIVALS BY SEA IN GREECE



IOM Greece also reports an unprecedented level of interest in its European Union-funded Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programme, which helps migrants to safely return home, if they so choose. Some 1,600 people have already registered for the scheme in 2016, 710 have already departed and over 400 are expected to leave in the next two weeks. Of the 710 who have already left, 70% were Moroccan, 9% Iranian, 8% Georgian and 2% Bangladeshi.

Meanwhile IOM Rome reported Thursday that 117 migrants were rescued at sea and brought to Messina in past 24 hours. Since the beginning of February, 625 migrants have been rescued at sea and brought to Italian ports.

IOM Germany forwarded Friday new statistics on asylum applications and arrivals for Germany for January 2016, as released by the German Ministry of Interior on Thursday (4/02.)

A total of 52,103 persons applied for asylum in Germany in January 2016 (50,532 initial asylum applications, 1,571 subsequent applications.) This is an increase of 108.1% compared to January 2015 and an increase of 7.9% compared to the previous month.

In 2015, a total of 476,649 persons applied for asylum in Germany. Top countries of origin were Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Albania, Iran, Serbia, Pakistan and Eritrea.

For the latest Mediterranean Update infographic please go to:

http://missingmigrants.iom.int/sites/default/files/Mediterranean_Update_05_February_2016.pdf

For latest arrivals and fatalities in the Mediterranean, please visit: <http://migration.iom.int/europe>

Learn more about Missing Migrants Project at: <http://missingmigrants.iom.int>

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IOM DG Attends London Pledging Conference for Syria and the Region – IOM Director General William Lacy Swing attended this week’s ‘*Supporting Syria and the Region 2016*’ pledging conference in London co-hosted by the UK, Germany, Kuwait, Norway, and the United Nations.

The conference yesterday (4/2) built on the successes of the three previous International Pledging Conferences which took place in Kuwait, as well as on the Berlin Conference on the Syrian Refugee Situation in 2014 and the recent Resilience Development Forum in Amman.

Donors pledged over USD 10 billion, with some of the largest pledges coming from the European Union, Germany, UK, France, Norway, USA, Italy, Japan and Kuwait.

Speaking to the UK’s Guardian newspaper yesterday in London, Ambassador Swing hailed the generosity of the global community, but pointed out that aid was only part of the answer.

“The aid is an important element in a complex formula, but clearly the most important thing is to stop the war. In the meantime we have to save lives and to improve lives – and that’s by educating children and creating jobs,” he said.

He also said that solving the Syrian crisis will not solve Europe’s migration crisis by itself – since Syrians only form half of the flow towards the continent.

“I cannot remember any time in my long career in which we’ve had so many simultaneous protracted complex crises – from the Horn of Africa to the Himalayas. There’s Boko Haram in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, unfinished revolutions in Libya and Yemen, and then the big one – Syria – all this at one time. The big one is getting Syria ended, but you still have to deal with a lot of other places where people whose lives are on hold,” he added.

He also called on the international community not to forego the policy of legal resettlement as part of its response – since the increased likelihood of formal resettlement tends to encourage people to stay put in transit countries for longer.

Ahead of the London Conference, IOM Director of Emergencies and Operations Mohammed Abdiker travelled to Syria and visited affected communities in rural Damascus, including a collective centre recently rehabilitated by IOM.

IOM has set up a Primary Health Care Clinic in the centre, as well as water distribution systems serving 18,000 people, including host community members, internal displaced and returnees.

“The situation for millions of people remains catastrophic inside Syria. Families I met in rural Damascus have lost everything, and have been displaced multiple times. Worse, they are losing hope in a brighter future. Pledges expressed by the international community in London need to materialize fast in order for humanitarian partners to be able to meet basic protection needs of Syrians,” said Abdiker.

In 2015, IOM provided shelter, non-food items, livelihood support, protection, health and transportation to over six million people, in Syria and the region. IOM continues to scale up its programming to meet the challenges posed by the protracted crisis with particular emphasis on supporting stabilization and building resilience.

IOM is supporting individuals and host communities to better cope with the impact of the crisis by increasing livelihood opportunities, improving access to basic services and infrastructure as well as preserving social cohesion, Abdiker noted.

The 2016 inter-agency appeal for the Syria Crisis amounts to USD 7.73 billion, both for operations to be carried out in Syria, as well as in refugee-hosting neighbouring countries. As part of this appeal, IOM is requesting USD 254 million for its operations inside Syria, and for operation in the region, notably in Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Turkey.

For further information, please contact Geraldine Ansart at IOM HQ, Tel. +41 79 250 02 28, Email: gansart@iom.int or the Syria Crisis Coordination team, Email: scc@iom.int

IOM: Migrants Must Be Included in Zika Virus Response Plans – IOM DG William Lacy Swing has called on governments to include migrants and mobile populations in Zika Virus preparedness and response plans.

They can do this by providing equitable access to culturally sensitive risk communication, notably for pregnant women, coverage of vector control and personal protective measures and inclusion in country surveillance measures, he said.

This follows this week’s (1/2) announcement by Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), that the recent cluster of neurological disorders and neonatal malformations reported in Brazil – following a similar cluster in French Polynesia in 2014 –constitutes a public health emergency of international concern requiring global responses.

Dr. Chan urged a coordinated international response that would improve surveillance, the detection of infections, congenital malformations, and neurological complications, intensify the control of mosquito populations, and expedite the development of diagnostic tests and vaccines to protect people at risk, especially during pregnancy. The WHO found no public health justification for restrictions on travel or trade to prevent the spread of the virus.

IOM is particularly concerned about the vulnerability of migrants and mobile populations in countries with Zika transmission and other high risk areas. Dr Mosca, Director of the IOM’s Migration Health Division, said: “It is important that we do not leave anybody behind. Migrants are often forgotten in epidemic preparedness and response plans and may be at higher risk due to poor living conditions and lack of access to health services.”

He added: “At present, the most important protective measures identified are the control of mosquito populations and the prevention of mosquito bites in at-risk individuals, especially pregnant women.”

For further information please contact IOM's Migration Health Division in Geneva, Email: MHDdpt@iom.int

IOM Organizes First Syrian Refugee Flight from Egypt to Canada—IOM, in coordination with UNHCR and the Governments of Canada and Egypt, this week flew 39 Syrian refugees from Egypt to Toronto, Canada.

They are the first of 600 Syrian refugees – some 47% of them children – whom IOM will help to resettle from Egypt in Canada this month, as part of Canada's commitment to relocate 25,000 Syrian refugees from the region.

Over 10,000 Syrians have already been assisted by IOM to relocate to Canada from Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey under the same programme.

The resettled Syrians will be given permanent Canadian residence documents and social insurance numbers on arrival.

“I feel we have been granted a second chance in life. It is not about me or my husband, but rather our kids. We did not feel safe in Syria anymore. We could not see a future for them. We are delighted our prayers for a more prosperous future have been answered,” said one of the refugees.

Meanwhile, IOM is assisting the Government of Canada by providing transport, basic registration, medical screening, logistical support and a brief pre-departure orientation briefing about Canada.

In addition to the briefing, IOM's Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) program is also distributing information packages to each of the departing families.

The Government of Canada interviews the refugees, records their biometrics and is responsible for security screening.

IOM Egypt Head of Office Amr Taha said: “We are very happy that these people are getting a chance to restart their lives in a new country. I would like to thank the governments of Canada and Egypt for their generosity and for helping us to ensure that everything went smoothly.”

IOM Egypt's resettlement program moved nearly 4,000 refugees in 2015 – 88% more than the previous year. Syrians represented 32% of the total.

For further information please contact Amr Taha at IOM Egypt, Tel: +20 2273 65140, Email: iomcairo@iom.int

Malian Migrants Stranded in Libya Fly Home – A group of 174 stranded Malian migrants flew home to Bamako from Tripoli's Mitiga Airport this week aboard an IOM charter flight.

As with other voluntary return flights organized over the past three months, IOM Libya worked closely with the Malian Embassy in Tripoli and the Libyan authorities to facilitate the repatriation.

Almost all the migrants in the group had entered Libya irregularly, either via Burkina Faso and Niger to reach Qatrun in southern Libya; or via Algeria to reach south-western Libya.

Most came to Libya to work and send back money to their families. Others were bound for Europe and simply transiting through Libya.

During their stay in Libya, the migrants faced huge difficulties. Few managed to find decent jobs and all of them risked being robbed or held to ransom due to widespread insecurity and crime.

Cisse, 27, arrived in Libya in 2009, before the 2011 revolution. He decided to return home two months ago, when he was detained by gunmen and forced to pay USD 450 for his release. Despite paying the money, the kidnappers beat him and shot him in the leg before releasing him.

Phophana, another of the group, was also shot in the leg while working in a gas station in Tripoli. He is currently recovering from the incident.

The day before their departure, the migrants overnighted at the Malian embassy in Tripoli. IOM staff provided them with a hot meal and hygiene kits.

On their return to Mali, the returnees were met by IOM staff and given money for their onward transport to their final destinations. The most vulnerable 48 cases were also given reintegration grants.

The charter flight was funded by the European Union and the Italian Ministry of Interior as part of an IOM project: “*Prevention and management of irregular migration flows from the Sahara Desert to the Mediterranean (SAHMED.)*” The charter was the fifth of a series of repatriation flights that IOM is organizing in the coming months to Senegal, Nigeria, Mali and Burkina Faso.

For further information, please contact IOM Libya. Othman Belbeisi, Tel +216 29 600389, Email: obelbeisi@iom.int or Ashraf Hassan, Email: ashassan@iom.int

IOM Guinea Supports Psychosocial, Socioeconomic Recovery of Ebola Survivors – IOM has launched a programme to distribute cash grants to Ebola survivors as part of community-led projects in Boke in the northwestern part of the country.

The pilot project, which supports the Guinean government in psychosocial and socioeconomic care for Ebola survivors, will also hold a first training workshop in mediation and managing community conflicts for survivors and communities in that region.

The training will let beneficiaries conduct community talks within their villages during which survivors and non-survivors will address their personal and collective difficulties related to Ebola. They will also serve as platforms for community dialogue related to socioeconomic recovery in the post-Ebola phase.

“These activities have two primary objectives: the first is to assist communities in their socioeconomic recovery following the devastating impacts of the epidemic, and the second is to let survivor communities divided by Ebola restart talks, and therefore fight against stigmatization,” said Kabla Amihere, IOM Chief of Mission in Guinea.

“By reviving the collective dynamics of ‘the palaver tree’, the community gathering enables them to address issues of the village, in particular those caused by the epidemic’s aftermath,” he noted.

Those trained will also sensitize their communities in conflict management and will lead to the elaboration of a community that can help the communities as a whole in their recovery.

“IOM will also provide financial support to micro-projects of socioeconomic recovery designed by the communities of Tamaransy and Katongoro. That funding will come in addition to individual cash grants, also provided by IOM to survivors in the area,” said Amihere.

This measure fits within the post-Ebola recovery phase, led by the Government of Guinea and supported by WHO, IOM and other partners, which includes other activities of reinforcement of health and epidemiological surveillance systems, especially in sensitive border regions.

With the support of USAID (OFDA), CDC and the governments of Japan and Belgium, IOM Guinea has been providing logistics support to the Guinean government through the National/Prefectural Emergency Coordination programme.

IOM has also implemented activities to strengthen monitoring mechanisms at borders through the Health, Border and Mobility Management programme and other community mobilization activities in key villages to enforce epidemiologic surveillance for early detection of Ebola and other potentially epidemic diseases in border and maritime zones.

According to latest information from the National Coordination body, there have been 3,804 cumulative confirmed, probable, and suspected Ebola cases in Guinea since the beginning of the epidemic, including 2,536 deaths. These figures yield an estimated mortality rate of 66.7%.

For further information, please contact Lola Simonet at IOM Guinea, Tel.: +224 625 25 94 94. Email: lsimonet@iom.int

Donkey Carts Build Resilience in Southern Somalia – IOM Somalia, with funding from the Government of Japan, has provided 100 vulnerable households in Garbaharey district in southern Somalia with donkey carts to improve their livelihoods and generate income.

While donkeys are relatively cheap in Garbaharey, the carts are relatively expensive, but are an important income generating asset. They have three main uses: transportation of agricultural products or household assets; fetching water; and renting out to other households.

“In 2015, the Al-Shabab militia restricted movement and trade in the district. Food and farm products could not be transported and trading was impossible. Donkey carts were the only means of transport available and they enabled us to feed the whole population. So the militia burned over 70 carts to try to stop movement in the district,” says District Commissioner Nuur Mohamed Buraale.

“In addition to being an essential livelihood asset in this region, they also play an important role in the protection and economic empowerment of women,” says IOM Somalia’s Heidi Salzer.

Water points in Garbaharey and its surrounding villages are scarce and women often have to walk for long distances in search of water. The average household in Garbaharey uses 60 litres of water in a day. One donkey can only carry 60 litres. The women therefore have to fetch water every day and carry it over long distances. But a donkey cart can carry 250 litres of water - enough to sustain a family for four days, she notes.

For further information, please contact Heidi Salzer at IOM Somalia, Tel: +252 617722436, Email: hsalzer@iom.int

IOM Tracks New Displacement in Burundi - IOM Burundi has released its second Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) report for three provinces - Makamba, Kirundo and Rutana. It shows a total of 25,081 internally displaced persons (IDPs), of whom 46% are men and 54% women.

Some 60.5% of the displaced are under 18. Another 34% are between 18 and 59 and 5.5% are over 60. 86% fled because of the socio-political situation, 9% because of natural disasters and 5% for other reasons.

Some 70% of the displaced are staying with host families, 18% are renting a house, 9% sought refuge in emptied or vacant houses and 3% found other solutions.

Burundi has experienced displacement since the second half of 2015, due to political instability and more recently natural disasters.

IOM Burundi launched its DTM in September 2015 to systematically collect, compile and analyze data on the displacement situation. Its main objective was to establish a comprehensive system to collect and disseminate data on IDPs and host communities, to inform the government and the humanitarian community of their needs.

IOM released its first DTM report in October 2015 covering the two provinces of Makamba and Kirundo, where a total of 14,804 IDPs were recorded and profiled.

The project is implemented in close collaboration with the Burundian Red Cross, whose presence on the ground facilitates access to communities, and the National Platform of Risk Prevention and Disaster Management (*Plate-forme Nationale de Prévention des Risques et de Gestion des Catastrophes*).

For further information, please contact Kristina Mejo at IOM Burundi, Tel: +257.71256332, Email: kmejo@iom.int

CAR Communities Brought Together by IOM-Backed Theatre, Dance Events - IOM and the artists collective “*Assoungba Systeme*” has organized six days of theatre and traditional dance events for mixed communities in Boda, an ethnically and religiously mixed town in the southwest of the Central African Republic (CAR.)

The crisis in the CAR caused deep divisions in Boda’s population and the creation of an enclave hosting predominantly Muslims and migrants. The population living in the enclave has been prevented from pursuing their livelihoods, seeking medical assistance or accessing the town’s market for extended periods since 2013.

Through various interventions by the humanitarian community and the presence of international security forces a relative calm is slowly being restored.

The theatre and dance events, which attracted over 5,000 people from both communities during the first three days, focused on the theme: “*I am Committed to Peace.*”

They were designed to further support the stabilization process by bringing both communities together to encourage dialogue and create a collective positive experience. The artists raised awareness of the need for mutual respect and understanding, living together and peaceful coexistence for achieving long- lasting peace and stability.

“The event was not only an encounter between communities separated by years of conflict and violence, but also a moment of reflection which encouraged them to forgive one another, a sign of forgiveness that came from the bottom of their hearts,” said Dr. Mandjeke, a comedian and Director of *Assoungba Systeme*.

The next three days were dedicated to training 30 beneficiaries from both communities on theatre skills. Theoretical and practical training sessions on the various aspects of theatre were followed by a final performance of a piece written by the students themselves.

“This was the first time the stadium of Boda saw such a turnout of people in a long time. I cannot remember the last time so many people gathered in Boda. Everyone came and everyone laughed with each other and danced together. It was great to see people walking home in mixed groups after the event and hearing people mention the theatre performance the next day in the local market,” said Fidele, one of the participants.

The activity was implemented as part of IOM CAR's European Union-funded project: "*Community Stabilization for at Risk Communities.*" The three main components of the project are local market revitalization, infrastructure rehabilitation and social cohesion activities. By engaging community members and revitalizing social spaces and infrastructure, the project aims to strengthen dialogue and solidarity within mixed communities.

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