



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

## Press Briefing Notes

Friday 19 February

Spokesperson: Joel Millman

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**With Growing Number of Child Deaths at Sea, IOM, UN Partner Agencies Call for Better Protection for Migrants and Refugees** - An average of two children have drowned every day since September 2015 as their families try to cross the eastern Mediterranean, and the number of child deaths is growing, according to IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF. The agencies are calling for better protection for those escaping conflict and despair.

Since last September, when the tragic death of toddler Aylan Kurdi captured the world's attention, more than 340 children, many of them babies and toddlers, have drowned in the eastern Mediterranean. The total number of children who have died may be even greater, the agencies say, their bodies lost at sea.

"We cannot turn our faces away from the tragedy of so many innocent young lives and futures lost – or fail to address the dangers so many more children are facing," said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake. "We may not have the ability now to end the desperation that causes so many people to try to cross the sea, but countries can and must cooperate to make such dangerous journeys safer. No one puts a child in a boat if a safer option is available."

The stretch of the Aegean Sea between Turkey and Greece is among the deadliest routes in the world for refugees and migrants. The winter's rough seas, overloading and the poor quality of boats and lifesaving equipment increase the risk of capsizing, making the journey significantly more dangerous.

"These tragic deaths in the Mediterranean are unbearable and must stop," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi. "Many of the children and adults who have died were trying to join relatives in Europe. Organizing ways for people to travel legally and safely, through resettlement and family reunion programs for example, should be an absolute priority, if we want to reduce the death toll," he added.

With children now accounting for 36 per cent of those on the move, the chance of them drowning in the Aegean Sea crossing from Turkey to Greece has grown proportionately. During the first six weeks of 2016, 410 people drowned out of the 80,000 crossing the eastern Mediterranean. This amounts to 35-fold increase year-on-year from 2015.

"Counting lives is not enough. We must act," said IOM Director General William Lacy Swing. "This is not only a Mediterranean problem, or even a European one. It is a humanitarian catastrophe in the making that

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demands the entire world's engagement. Haiti's 2010 earthquake was not a matter for only one hemisphere, nor was the 2004 Southeast Asian tsunami. Those disasters were met by an outpouring of humanitarian action. So must this one.”

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**Mediterranean Migrant and Refugee Arrivals Top 90,000 in 2016** - IOM monitors in the eastern Mediterranean reported this week that cold weather contributed to sharp drop in arrivals in Greece from Turkey, although the number topped 3,350 on Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, after many days of slow movement.

During the past week, IOM has learned of a single death on this route - a four year old boy believed to be traveling with a family from Afghanistan.

IOM unofficial data indicates that 937,241 migrants and refugees arrived between 01/01/2015 and 17/02/2016 through Greece’s maritime borders, suggesting that the figure will likely reach one million by mid-March.

## MEDITERRANEAN DEVELOPMENTS

### ARRIVALS BY SEA AND DEATHS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN 1 JANUARY – 18 FEBRUARY 2016

Country of Arrival	Arrivals	Deaths
Greece	83,591	321 ( <i>Eastern Med route</i> )
Italy	7,165	90 ( <i>Central Med route</i> )
<b>Estimated Total</b>	<b>90,756</b>	<b>411</b>

DATA ON DEATHS OF MIGRANTS COMPILED BY IOM GMDAC. ALL NUMBERS ARE MINIMUM ESTIMATES.  
ARRIVALS ESTIMATES BASED ON DATA FROM RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS AND IOM FIELD OFFICES.

Country	Total 2014	Total 2015
Greece	34,442	853,650
Italy	170,100	153,842

### ARRIVALS BY SEA IN GREECE

<b>1 January – 17 February 2016</b>	<b>83,591</b>
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<b>1 January – 31 December 2015</b>	<b>853,650*</b>
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\* Unofficial data relating to maritime borders collected by IOM staff and Greek authorities.

For the latest Mediterranean Update infographic please go to:

[http://missingmigrants.iom.int/sites/default/files/Mediterranean\\_Update\\_19\\_February\\_2016\\_0.pdf](http://missingmigrants.iom.int/sites/default/files/Mediterranean_Update_19_February_2016_0.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 Responds to Humanitarian Needs after Fighting Erupts in Malakal, South Sudan** – IOM is responding to urgent humanitarian needs after heavy fighting erupted between armed actors in the UN protection of civilians (PoC) site near South Sudan’s Malakal town on 17 February.

The violence and a fire that ripped through the site have left at least 18 people dead, forced at least 25,000 IDPs to flee their shelters to secure areas of the site, and destroyed critical humanitarian infrastructure, including two IOM primary health care clinics.

The fighting continued through 18 February, leaving some areas of the PoC site looted and burned, including shelters, clinics and water tanks.

First responders from medical NGOs and IOM are treating at least 91 people injured in the fighting. Casualty figures may increase once humanitarian workers gain access to all affected areas of the site to assess the situation.

“IOM and our partners are using all available measures to save lives. However, the destruction of humanitarian facilities severely hinders our ability to assist the vulnerable when they are most in need,” said IOM South Sudan Chief of Mission David Derthick.

Additional IOM technical and operational specialists were deployed to the Malakal PoC site on 19 February to assess needs and facilitate lifesaving aid operations. In addition, IOM is dispatching 6.5 metric tonnes of emergency relief items, including tents for medical assistance, to Malakal via cargo flight.

Prior to the fighting, over 47,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the Shilluk, Dinka and Nuer ethnic groups, as well as Darfuris, were seeking protection at the site in response to the two-year conflict and rising humanitarian needs across the country.

When the fighting broke out, the majority of these IDPs fled to secure areas of the site that were not designed to host IDPs, and thousands of others left the PoC site for surrounding areas.

In coordination with partners, IOM is installing temporary water points to provide safe water to IDPs and taking measures to ensure a continual supply of water from the White Nile River, which is the source of most of the water used by the PoC site.

IOM and partners had developed new areas of the PoC site in 2014 and 2015 to improve living conditions for IDPs and shelter new arrivals, including an influx of [16,000 IDPs](#) in mid-2015.

Since December 2013, the conflict in South Sudan has displaced more than 2.3 million people, including an estimated 1.69 million IDPs. Relief agencies estimate that approximately 6.1 million people will be in need of humanitarian aid this year.

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**IOM Helps Stranded Nigerian Migrants Return Home from Sudan** – IOM has helped a group of 42 stranded, vulnerable Nigerian migrants, including 31 women and 19 children, to voluntarily return home to Nigeria. They flew to Kano International Airport from Khartoum.

The operation was part of a Norwegian government-funded IOM project: “*Enhancing Protection and Improving Knowledge on the Risks of Irregular Migration in Sudan*”, which was launched in December 2014 and has established a Migrant Resource and Response Centre ([MRRC](#)) in Khartoum.

Most of the Nigerian migrants, who had been in Khartoum for 1-3 years, were close to destitute and surviving on the streets through begging and casual work.

They included Ameena\* (name changed\*), an 82-year old grandmother who came to Sudan in 2013 hoping to reach Saudi Arabia to perform the Muslim Hajj. She left her daughter and six grandchildren behind in Nigeria. After struggling for over three years, she failed to save enough money to complete the journey. Her daughter recently died and Ameena now needs to return home to take care of the children.

The return, facilitated by IOM's Sudan MRRC, is part of IOM's global Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programme, which provides durable solutions for stranded migrants, migrants in an irregular situation, victims of trafficking, and unsuccessful asylum seekers worldwide.

IOM Sudan's MRRC provides AVRR services focusing on humane, coordinated and cost effective returns and reintegration of migrants who cannot or do not want to stay in host countries and who voluntarily wish to return to their country of origin.

The AVRR services offer information and counselling to potential returnees, medical assistance for those with health problems, post-return assistance in the country of origin; as well as services focused on reintegration assistance and monitoring of migrants wellbeing after their return to the country of origin.

In addition, the MRRC in Sudan provides migrants with accurate and timely information on regular migration channels and the dangers of irregular migration to enable them to make informed decisions on safe migration. Planned services include language classes and other capacity building activities, to be designed in consultation with the migrant community.

In 2015, IOM helped 260 Sudanese from 16 countries to voluntarily return to Sudan. Over half – 142 – came from Egypt. Greece, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden all helped 10-25 Sudanese to return. Other countries of departure included Australia, Belgium, Denmark, and Estonia.

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**IOM, Mozambique Launch Diaspora Engagement Project** - In September 2015, IOM Mozambique and the National Institute for Mozambican Communities in the Diaspora (INACE) received funding from the IOM Development Fund (IDF) to further involve the Mozambican diaspora in Mozambique's development process.

This week (18/2) INACE and IOM held a one-day workshop to officially launch the project and train members of INACE's Steering Committee on issues relating to migration and development.

The objective of the project is to promote communication between the government and the Mozambican diaspora, with the aim of engaging the diaspora in Mozambique's national development agenda.

This will be done by building the capacity of the government to enhance their engagement with the diaspora and by creating a Mozambican diaspora network with access to information about opportunities to engage with Mozambique.

Migration has been a part of life in Mozambique throughout the country's history. According to a 2000 World Bank report, approximately 11.7 million Mozambicans migrated after the country's independence in 1975, in part due to the 16-year civil war that broke out two years after independence.

As a result, many Mozambican professionals found work in more stable African economies or outside the continent. Most moved to neighbouring countries, especially South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania. As a result, the public sector has been adversely affected by the loss of so many educated and skilled people.

The diaspora engagement project followed extensive consultations with the government, which carried out a diaspora mapping exercise in 2013, in collaboration with Mozambique's Eduardo Mondlane University.

The mapping exercise showed a lack of communication channels between the diaspora and the government. There was also a lack of information about policies and legislation, as well as day-to-day information about opportunities in the country. Consular services were seen as limited.

This project is in line with Mozambique's national Diaspora Engagement Strategy (2014) and its new Five Year Plan (2015-2019.) The third pillar of the plan, which focuses on strengthening of international cooperation, highlights the need to engage Mozambicans living in the diaspora for national development, and the need to support Mozambican communities abroad.

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**IOM, Japan Help Rebuild Conflict-affected Eastern Ukraine** – Two child and youth creativity centers and a municipal music school, refurbished by IOM with funding from the Government of Japan, have re-opened in Ukraine's conflict-affected Donbas region.

The three facilities in Kostyantynivka, Druzhkivka and Svyatohirsk will serve almost 2,500 people, including over 500 displaced children and adults.

According to the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, there are about 400,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in government-controlled areas of the conflict-affected Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

The armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine has impacted the political, social and economic fabric of the region, creating vulnerabilities and a lack of basic services.

The influx of IDPs has created an additional burden on the social infrastructure. Thousands of public buildings and other infrastructure have been damaged during the fighting.

Since March 2015, with funding from the Government of Japan, IOM has been running a project in eight post-conflict communities in Donetsk and Luhansk regions to assist IDPs, local communities and returnees to restore social infrastructure and to rebuild trust.

This has included workshops, master classes and competitions held at the social centers which now have new roofs and windows. Music has also played an important role in integrating displaced people, especially children, in their new communities.

Overall, the project has renovated 21 social infrastructure facilities, serving over 20,000 people, including almost 9,000 IDPs and other vulnerable groups.

Another focus of the project has been to provide micro-grants to IDPs and people affected by the conflict to establish or further develop their own businesses.

Over 600 people have attended business training and some 400 beneficiaries were selected to participate in a grant programme that will provide USD 900 of equipment per person.

"The Government of Japan is providing comprehensive humanitarian support to internally displaced people and people affected by the conflict in the Donbas region in cooperation with various international organizations. The project implemented by IOM has become an excellent example of effective support for initiatives that promote social cohesion of IDPs and host communities," said Ambassador of Japan to Ukraine Shigeki Sumi, promising ongoing support.

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**IOM Aids Paraguay Flood Victims** – IOM has donated USD 60,000 to help Paraguay to respond to a humanitarian emergency caused by heavy rain and floods that have hit the country since the end of 2015.

In a letter addressed to Paraguayan President Horacio Cartes, IOM Director General William Lacy Swing expressed IOM's solidarity with the estimated 100,000 people affected and offered to make IOM emergency response staff and specialists in camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) available if needed.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Eladio Loizaga and Minister of the Secretariat for the National Emergencies (SEN) Joaquín Roa accepted the donation this week.

IOM Paraguay Head of Office Richard Velázquez Velázquez said that IOM is committed to help the government to provide protection and assistance to people displaced by the floods, particularly the most vulnerable.

IOM Paraguay co-leads the Shelter Cluster with the SEN and is also actively involved in sectors related to logistics, early recovery, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and the protection of vulnerable groups.

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**IOM, ICMPD, Latin American Governments Meet to Discuss Migrants Caught in Crises** – Officials from 20 Latin America and Caribbean governments have met in San José, Costa Rica, to share ideas on how to support migrants caught in countries affected by conflict or natural disasters.

The two-day meeting was the fourth regional consultation of the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MiCiC) Initiative, an intergovernmental consultative process co-chaired by the Philippines and the United States and supported by IOM, which serves as its secretariat. The initiative aims to create principles, guidelines and best practices for a better response for migrants trapped in catastrophes or armed conflicts.

The MiCiC Initiative is motivated by situations like the 2011 civil unrest in Libya, where 800,000 migrants from 120 nationalities were caught in the middle of the war and left stranded by their employers. At that time, IOM evacuated over 200,000 migrants safely home at the request of 45 governments.

Director of the Secretariat of the MiCiC Initiative, IOM's Michele Klein Solomon noted: "Often, migrants are invisible in the middle of an emergency and we need to be aware of their vulnerabilities and needs. That is the reason why we are here."

According to Klein Solomon, migrants are especially vulnerable in the midst of a crisis for many reasons, including language barriers, difficulties in access to information and even their unintended exclusion from emergency response plans.

The regional consultation, which finished yesterday (18/2), follows previous consultations held in Manila for Asia, Dakar for West and Central Africa and Brussels for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

By September 2016, the MICIC Initiative will launch a framework of voluntary, non-binding principles, guidelines, and effective practices to address the protection and assistance of migrants caught in countries in crisis, likely at the UN General Assembly High Level Event on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants.

The MiCiC Initiative working group consists of the co-Chairs and the governments of Australia, Bangladesh, Costa Rica and Ethiopia, the European Commission, IOM, UNHCR, the Office of the UN SRSG on International Migration, ICMPD and Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration.

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**Indonesia National Police Chief Launches Two-Year IOM Training Programme for 7,000 Female Officers** - Indonesia's half-million strong national police force (INP) will train thousands of female officers (*polwan*) in the second phase of its latest collaboration with IOM, launched this week in Lampung province on the island of Sumatra.

“This training is the realization of the national police's cooperation with IOM which will provide outputs and outcomes in the form of understanding, insight and skills for participants in handling and resolving cases of violence against women and children, trafficking in persons and people smuggling,” National Police Chief Gen. Badrodin Haiti told more than 200 junior female officers.

“The seven months of education you received at the police academy did not touch on the sort of specific technical aspects of the training you will receive from IOM so you may better perform duties like handling cases of violence against women and children.”

The INP reacted to past criticism it has not more aggressively recruited women into the ranks of the fifth largest police agency in the world by hiring 7,000 female officers in 2014 alone, increasing representation on the force by one-third to 21,000 officers nationally. These new policewomen are the focus of the latest round of IOM training.

“There have been female officers in the INP since 1948, and we are pleased to be able to contribute to the professional development of the young women who joined the force in 2014,” said IOM Indonesia Chief of Mission Mark Getchell.

“Indonesia's *polwan* perform a job that is rife with risk and danger with determination, perseverance, integrity and selflessness. I congratulate you all on your appointments and commend you for helping to make your communities better, safer places to live,” he added.

The second training in this latest collaboration was held for 165 *polwan* in Riau province on Thursday.

IOM has been involved in human rights and community police training in Indonesia for more than a decade. The new phase of the *polwan* training comes on the heels of a two-year project that trained 3,173 policewomen in 32 provinces around the country in the protection for women and children, trafficking in persons and people smuggling, as well as proactive and preventive policing.

The latest phase of training also includes a social communications component to help officers break down barriers between communities and the national force.

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