



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

Press Briefing Notes

Friday 29 January 2016

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Migrant Arrivals in Greece in 2016 Top 55,000, Over 200 Deaths - IOM estimates that 55,528 migrants and refugees crossed the Mediterranean to enter Europe during the first 28 days of 2016 - a rate of nearly 2,000 per day. The daily average is nearly equivalent to the total numbers for the month of January as recently as two years ago.

During the same period IOM has recorded some 244 deaths at sea, as well as at least a dozen more deaths of migrants and refugees who died either after reaching Europe or traveling to a launch point in Turkey. By comparison total deaths on Mediterranean Sea routes were 12 in 2014 and 82 last year.

ARRIVALS BY SEA AND DEATHS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN 1 - 28 JANUARY 2016

Country of Arrival	Arrivals	Deaths
Greece	52,055	218 <i>(Eastern Med route)</i>
Italy	3,473	26 <i>(Central Med route)</i>
Estimated Total	55,528	244

Arrivals by Sea, Italy

1 January – 28 January 2016	3,473*
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- Over 1,700 migrants have been brought ashore since Monday. Rescue operations at sea were still ongoing on January 28; migrants and refugees were continuing to be brought to Sicilian ports through Thursday evening.
- Six drownings were reported Thursday off Sicily.

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

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Arrivals by Sea, Greece

1 January – 27 January 2016	52,055
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The latest deaths were recorded on Wednesday and Thursday. Seven migrants died on Wednesday (27/01) off the Greek island of Kos and another 26 (10 men, 6 women, 10 children) on Thursday (28/01) off Samos, following shipwrecks. They included 15 children. IOM believes more victims are missing.

According to IOM staff in Samos, who were asked by the authorities to assist with translation, 65 migrants were squeezed into a wooden boat designed to carry at most 30 people. The boat departed Turkey on Tuesday night and began taking on water almost immediately. It sank 24 hours later off Samos. All victims and survivors reportedly were Kurds from Iraq.

The 218 deaths on the so-called Eastern Mediterranean route linking Turkey to Greece through the first four weeks of January 2016 are almost four times those recorded on that route last year through mid-August. During the whole of 2015, some 805 migrants and refugees perished in these waters.

Despite winter weather conditions and the strong winds of the last few days, an estimated 52,055 migrants and refugees have arrived in the Greek islands since the beginning of the year. This is close to the total recorded in the relatively “safe” month of July 2015, when warm weather and calm seas allowed 54,899 to make the journey.

IOM earlier this week reported that a survey of some 52,000 migrants and refugees arriving in Greece revealed that 90% were from Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan, which would allow them to leave Greece and enter the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYRoM) en route to Western Europe as asylum seekers. The Idomeni border crossing from Greece to FYRoM remained closed from midday to midnight on Wednesday. FYRoM officials blamed congestion at the country’s border with Serbia.

For the latest Mediterranean Update infographic

<http://missingmigrants.iom.int/sites/default/files/Mediterranean Update 29 January 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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Survivors of Somalia Boat Tragedy Return Home to Ethiopia - In early January a migrant boat left the northern coast of Somalia bound for Yemen. It carried 106 Ethiopian and Somali migrants who had trekked across large swathes of remote land on foot and by truck to reach the point of embarkation.

The boat was part of the large-scale smuggling business that facilitates the irregular migration of thousands of migrants to Yemen from the Horn of Africa each year. Over 90,000 migrants arrived in Yemen in 2015, and almost 90% of them were from Ethiopia.

Soon after it left the shore, the boat developed mechanical problems and was unable to make the 10-hour crossing to Yemen. It drifted at sea for a week, before capsizing in rough seas off the coast of Somaliland, the autonomous region of northern Somalia.

Thirty-six migrants drowned on 8 January 2016 ([IOM Press Note of 12 January 2016](#)), adding to the total of 95 others known to have died in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden in 2015.

IOM's office in Hargeisa, Somaliland, worked closely with government authorities to assist the survivors with emergency assistance, medical care and transportation. They were transferred by road to Berbera, and then to Hargeisa where they were accommodated at the Ethiopian Community Center.

On January 26th, 64 of the survivors opted to return home to Ethiopia with IOM's Assisted Voluntary Return programme. They travelled by road back to Jijiga, Ethiopia and then on to their final destinations.

Hassan, 28, told IOM: "I am going back to Ethiopia to look for work and to see my family and five children. I will tell everyone not to try irregular migration to the Gulf."

The operation was funded by the US State Department's Bureau for Populations, Refugee, and Migration (PRM.)

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Two Eritrean Refugees Die in Traffic Accident in Ethiopia – IOM Ethiopia says that it deeply regrets the death of two refugees in a tragic highway accident that occurred on Wednesday (27/1) afternoon near Mekele in Ethiopia.

The accident happened when a group of 57 Tigrinya-speaking refugees from Eritrea was being transported by bus from the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa to Shire, a refugee camp in northern Ethiopia.

Besides the two people killed, three were seriously injured and four more suffered minor injuries and were taken to a local hospital for monitoring. The seriously injured passengers were evacuated to a hospital in Maicho, about 80 kilometers from the crash site.

The group had come to Addis Ababa with an IOM escort to complete medical assessments required for resettlement in Canada and were returning to the refugee camp when the accident occurred.

Eyewitnesses said that the accident occurred when a tire burst on a wet highway, causing the 45-seater bus to roll over.

Gabriel Okutoi, an operations official for IOM in Addis Ababa, said that a second bus in the two-bus convoy was not involved in the crash and that no IOM staff were injured.

The Shire refugee camp has a population of 110,956 and many refugees living there have been waiting years for resettlement abroad.

For further information, please contact Gabriel Okutoi at IOM Addis Ababa, at +2519112 29752 or Email: gokutoi@iom.int

IOM Builds Capacity to Combat Human Trafficking in Mauritius - IOM Mauritius, in partnership with UNODC and Mauritius' Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions organized a US-funded training on combating human trafficking on 27 and 28 January in Port Louis.

Some 25 participants included representatives of the Mauritian Police Force, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Ministry of Labour and Employment, and Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare.

The training focused on victim identification, investigation and prosecution. It also discussed ways to improve coordination between the government stakeholders involved in counter-trafficking activities.

Director of Public Prosecutions Satyajit Boolell opened the training, noting that there are many challenges in addressing human trafficking in Mauritius. They include the need to better protect the victims and to prosecute perpetrators.

US Ambassador in Mauritius Shari Villarosa highlighted the vulnerability of minors working in the sex trade, as well as migrant workers in the textile industry.

Mauritius is a source, transit, and destination country for trafficked men, women, and children. But the government is making significant efforts to comply with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. A strong commitment from all stakeholders is highly needed to improve the situation.

IOM Mauritius Head of Office Timon Van Lidth said: “We need as much as possible to join our competencies, resources and efforts in order to combat human trafficking effectively. The very close collaboration that has led to this training is a good example of how we can work and achieve positive results together.”

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IOM Facilitates EU Visit for Officials from Kurdistan Region - IOM facilitated a study visit this week for government officials from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and the Bureau of Migration and Displacement (BMD) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) to France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The five-day study visit was organized through IOM’s MAGNET II Project, funded by the European Union Return Fund. This project aims to facilitate the sustainable reintegration of Iraqi nationals who have voluntarily returned from Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom through vocational training and job placements in the KRI. Since April 2014 to date, the project has helped 71 beneficiaries to find jobs. Another 33 returnees have also benefited from training.

In each of the three countries, the KRI government officials met with representatives from labour ministries and learnt about national and local employment policies and practices to improve opportunities for job seekers.

The KRI is currently facing an economic recession and increasing levels of unemployment due to multiple challenges. These include budget cuts, the human and financial cost of fighting ISIL, and hosting more than a million displaced Iraqis and nearly 250,000 Syrian refugees.

The delegation also met with immigration officials in the three host countries, highlighting the importance of sustainable reintegration packages for Iraqi nationals choosing to return home.

BMD General Director Shokr Yaseen said: “The MAGNET project is a good model for the sustainable reintegration of our compatriots and we urge the EU and participating EU member states to continue supporting MAGNET. In 2015 numerous Iraqis sold their possessions and risked or lost their lives to reach Europe. Many who made it have little hope of staying in Europe and hence we have witnessed a spike in returns in recent months. It is important that these people receive support with their reintegration.”

MoLSA Director Arif Hito added: “This week we learned a lot about policies and methods to improve the vocational skills and job opportunities of vulnerable target groups. In close collaboration with IOM and other partners, we are keen to put this new knowledge into practice in the KRI for the benefit of returnees and local communities.”

IOM MAGNET II Project Manager, Nazanine Nozarian said: “Strengthening the links between Iraq and the EU is a concrete step to facilitate partnerships in the field of development and humanitarian assistance. IOM missions in participating host countries are committed to work together with EU member states, and Iraqi representatives to provide Iraqi nationals returning voluntarily with reintegration support - particularly as returns are increasing.”

IOM Iraq Chief of Mission Thomas Lothar Weiss said: “The MAGNET Project, managed by IOM France, provides essential reintegration assistance to Iraqi nationals returning to their home country, assisting them to engage in training, find employment and contribute to their communities. This study visit will strengthen links between Iraqi and EU officials, to share lessons learned in employment assistance and enhance opportunities for returnees. We look forward to continuing this collaboration.”

For further information please contact Nazanine Nozarian at IOM France, Tel. +33. 140 44 06 84, Email: nnozarian@iom.int. Or Sandra Black at IOM Iraq, Tel. +964 751 234 2550, Email: sblack@iom.int. Or visit www.magnet-project.eu.

IOM to Cooperate with Business Advisory Firm on Migrant Labour Standards - IOM has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with global accounting firm Grant Thornton, focussing on bringing together the best of both organisations to assist migrant labourers across Southeast Asia.

The MOU will enable research on ethical recruitment and working conditions of migrant labourers in the region. The two organizations will also draft a business case for ethical trading, recruitment and management of migrant labour with a special focus on South East Asia and extended supply chains.

Under the MoU, IOM and Grant Thornton intend to work with local and international companies on the issues of ethical trading, recruitment and management of migrant labour through field testing, validation, certification and on-going “organic” management of the company’s migrant labour practices

David Knight, IOM’s Regional Coordinator for Viet Nam, Cambodia and Lao PDR said: “Consumers are a huge factor in IOM’s mission, especially given the interconnected nature of business in the modern world. We are keen to get started on this project, which will hopefully reassure consumers that the products they are purchasing come from companies with ethical migrant labour and supply chains. Our partnership with Grant Thornton will look to promote human rights standards, ethical recruitment practices and employment conditions for these migrants.”

Ian Pascoe, Grant Thornton’s CEO in Thailand said: “We are very excited to be working with IOM. The unique combination of IOM’s significant experience in this area and Grant Thornton’s Assurance and Advisory skills and extensive commercial relationships will ultimately directly benefit those that need it most – the migrant labourers themselves, at a time when there is clearly a need to protect the most, those that have the least.”

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IOM Holds Policy Dialogue in ROK on Nepali Remittances--Republic of Korea – A policy dialogue and capacity building workshop on how to better use remittances for sustainable development in Nepal gathered Nepali and South Korean government officials, academics, and civil society together in Seoul on 26-28 January.

Part of the research project “The Role of Remittances as Effective Development Finance for Sustainable Development in Nepal” (Remittances Project hereafter), funded by [KOICA and IOM Development Fund](#), the three-day event was co-organized by [IOM](#) and Ewha Womans University (EWU). The two

organizations have been leading the project in [Nepal and ROK](#) since its inception in January 2015, in collaboration with IOM Nepal and the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS), a local research partner in Nepal.

The main goals of the event were to provide a platform to examine the challenges migrants and receiving countries face in utilizing remittances for development, and to assist the two governments to make better policies to turn the hard-earned money into lasting wealth for receiving households and migrants themselves.

Since last year, the Remittances Project – which collects data from all points in the migration cycle – has been conducting a country-wide survey in Nepal for approximately 20,000 households including those with potential and returnee migrants, as well as surveys for 250 Nepali migrants currently in ROK under the Employment Permit System (EPS). First established in 2004, EPS is a bilateral agreement among the ROK government and 15 Asian countries for cross-border labour migration.

“Although remittances make up over a quarter of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and exceed all other external sources of foreign capital in Nepal, only 10 per cent of these remittances have been used for savings, household property, and education, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics,” said Miah Park, Head of Office at IOM Seoul, pointing out that the Government of Nepal recently emphasized the improved remittance use in its national development plan.

“Providing crucial data about migrants’ current situations, needs, and desires will help create the policies and programmes to promote social and economic development through remittances and resources gained abroad, while at the same time empowering migrants to gain the most out of their migration experiences,” she added.

IOM Nepal Chief of Mission Maurizio Busatti, together with representatives from the Government of Nepal including officials from the National Planning Commission, Ministry of Labour and Employment, and Central Bureau of Statistics, also participated in the event.

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