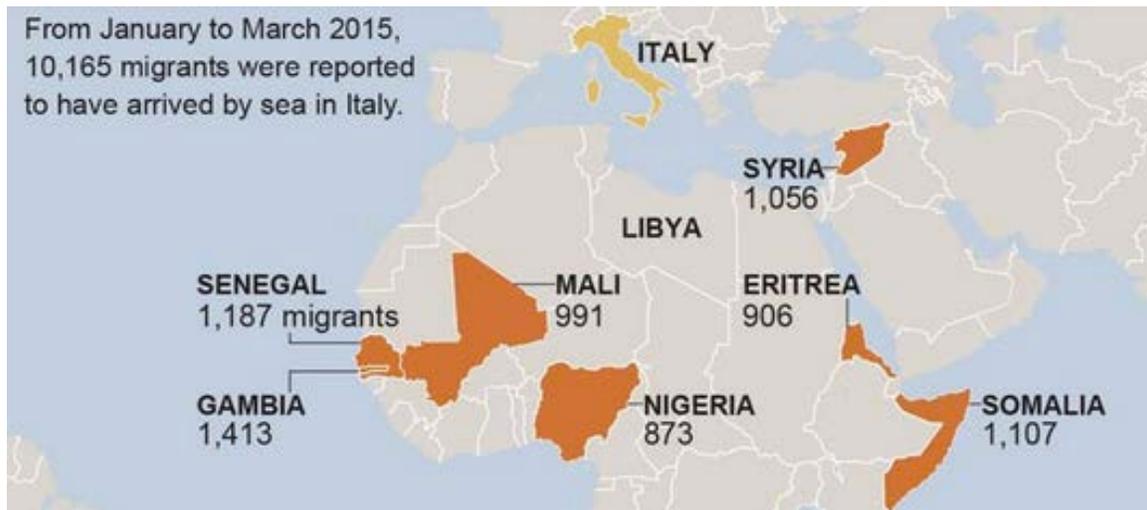


April 2015: Don't Go-Protect, Inform, Act

Today's Migrants

Those who are migrating across the Mediterranean today are fleeing conflict, poverty, violence and persecution. In 2015, the top countries that people are fleeing from are Gambia, Senegal, Somalia and Syria all of which have serious stability problems thus forcing people to fear for their safety and try and find a new life.



Credit-Al Jazeera

Many of those from sub Saharan African countries who are migrating first came to Libya to work but with the civil war many are being forced to leave. A large portion of these people are choosing to go to Europe instead of risking starting over in their home countries.

Those fleeing war zones such as Syrians are finding it difficult to live in neighboring countries and are flying to Libya to travel to Europe, as they feel there is no other choice. Since the beginning of the war in Syria, migration across the Mediterranean has increased dramatically. In 2012 only 500 deaths were reported crossing the Mediterranean this increased to 600 in 2013 and then increased 6 times to 3,500 deaths in 2014 (out of 75,000). Now, only 4 months into 2015- 1,600 deaths have already occurred. ⁱ

The Cost:

It costs around 10,000 USD for the entire journey from a person's home country to their end destination in Europe. However, most people do not have this much money to pay up front and pay for the journey one leg at a time. Smugglers often times make migrants do physical labor to make up this cost once they have reached their coastal departure point. This has left thousands of people in limbo in



Libya as they are forced into this work to pay for their journey. Once it comes time for the trip across the Mediterranean, those who still cannot afford the journey are stuffed into the bottom of the boat near the engine. These people risk a higher rate of death as they either die from asphyxiation or because they cannot escape when the boat is in distress. ⁱⁱ

Routes:

[ARDD-Legal Aid](#) has been tracking the routes of those leaving Syria as many of our beneficiaries have decided to attempt this dangerous journey. With their help, we have been able to understand a bit more about the decisions that these migrants have to make. The trip usually takes between 2 – 6 weeks. For many Syrians leaving from Jordan the starting destination is Algeria, where a visa at the airport is not required for refugees and forged passports (which many refugees have acquired at the cost of \$1,500-\$2,000) are not often detected at the airport. Upon arrival, the traffickers work as a chain, delivering the migrants from one destination to another across the desert until they reach Libya. At the border in Algeria, migrants have to walk for an hour to cross the border where they are handed off to the Libyan traffickers. Each migrant must carry \$4,000-\$5,000 with them to pay traffickers on each side of the border. In Libya, migrants walk to Zuwarah, the Libyan coastal city where most migrant boats to Italy leave from. Traffickers hold dozens of migrants in small homes and basements for weeks until the boats are set for departure and full fees are acquired from each person. This staging area sees countless deaths as people are often left for days without food and water in crowded rooms until their traffickers return. Libya's lack of coast guard makes this an ideal departure spot as migrant boats will not get caught and sent back before they reach international or European waters. ⁱⁱⁱ

The Arrival

Following their arrival and a medical checkup, migrants are immediately taken to detention centers. In Italy where the majority of migrants arrive, there are 11 detention centers in which migrants are held as their requests for asylum are being processed. These asylum requests can take up to 10 years. These detention centers have been routinely criticized for their unfair and unsafe conditions. Since 2012 and with the rise in migrant arrivals to Italy, 5 of the 11 center have had to be redone as inmate riots have destroyed parts of the detention centers. ^{iv}

Risks:

For those crossing the Mediterranean, the largest risk is death. In 2014, migrants had a 1 in 50 chance of dying during the journey across the Sea. In 2015 this has



increased where people now face a 1 in 23 chance of dying. With the end of Europe's Search and Rescue mission, Mare Nostrum, on November 1, 2014 and the implementation of the replacement Triton program, there are no longer any search and rescue requirements. The Triton program's mandate is to patrol the border and only covers, 30 miles off of the Italian coastline. Most migrants die in the waters right off the coast of Libya, making Europe's water patrol essentially useless.

Additionally, there are thousands of people that go missing or die even before they leave land. The smugglers who arrange for these journeys are ruthless and many people are robbed, killed, or beaten on their journey to the coast.

The goal for all who are attempting this passage to Europe is to get asylum yet this is not guaranteed. In reality only a very small percentage of people are actually given the legal protection that they desired when they decided to migrate.

Alternatives

Currently there limited options for asylum in Europe even if countries are legally obligated to take in refugees and consider applications from asylum seekers as per international law. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees a right to seek and enjoy asylum. For Syrian Refugees one of the major problems that they face in receiving asylum comes from their status of refugees if they register with UNHCR. UNHCR does not have the ability to resettle these refugees where they would like as it is the countries that make the decision to accept refugees. However, very few countries are fulfilling their international obligation to do this, for example in 2013 there were 2.5 million Syrian refugees and the United States only accepted 36 of them.

Additionally, applying and being approved for asylum is a very long and tedious process. In Europe, only 25% of the asylum claims that are heard are accepted. During this process, countries allow these people to live in the country but if their claim is denied they are deported.

Two weeks ago an emergency summit was held at the EU in Brussels where it was decided that only 5,000 resettlement places would be offered to those in detention centers while the rest are deported. Last year 150,000 people survived the Journey to Europe. This means that a little more that 3% of the people who make this journey will be resettled.

Overall, protection and access to asylum must be provided. The developing world is hosting 80% of the world's refugees and resettlement and asylum are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain. The international community must work to provide lasting solutions and protection to those in need. ^v



ARDD-Legal Aid's Role

As a Jordanian Civil Society Organization that works with all vulnerable groups here in Jordan, we have had many of the people we work with choose this risky option to cross the Mediterranean and many have died doing so. We have a responsibility to raise awareness of the dangers of this journey and to encourage legal ways to receive asylum. ARDD-Legal Aid has worked very hard to disseminate information to those that we work with and to vulnerable communities. By working to increase protection of these vulnerable groups in Jordan we have the ability to reduce the amount of people who attempt this journey.

Don't Go

In the first 17 days of April 11,000 people were rescued in the Mediterranean. And just two weeks ago 1,100 people died while attempting to reach Europe. It is obvious that something must be done now. This is the second time that [ARDD-Legal Aid](#) has done the [#DontGo-Protect, Inform, Act](#) campaign. We first started this in November of last year when the EU decided to stop all search and rescue operations with their Mare Nostrum Program. We saw that this as foolish strategy, where they were trying to scare people from making the journey hoping that by drowning one person they could save another. 2015 has made it very clear that this is not an effective solution. With the tragedies that were piling on top of one another in April we saw it necessary to start the campaign again. With the momentum of so many organizations that are also calling for change such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, International Migration Organization and Save the Children we decided to take action again. European leaders are coming together in emergency meetings over the course of the next few weeks in attempts to find sustainable solutions to this growing problem. We hope that they choose to increase search and rescue operations but that they also work to prevent migrants from making this journey in the first place by increasing access to asylum.

Recommendations

By disseminating information to the vulnerable, we can help increase information on the alternatives. It is important that people are aware of their rights and have access to the services that can help them. [ARDD-Legal Aid](#)'s 24 hour help line is one such way that people can become aware of their rights. Additionally, we can work to create an environment that is welcoming and promotes social cohesion.



This way we can prevent migrants from ever feeling as though they need to undertake the dangerous journey across the Mediterranean.
On a higher level, we can work to encourage policy makers to increase protection and asylum options. There are many social media campaigns and petitions that you can join to urge real policy change.
Currently much of what is occurring is reactive due to the tragedies that have occurred over the past few weeks. What we need now are real sustainable solutions. These solutions need to address the problems at the root so that people are not forced from their homes and believe their only option for a better life is this dangerous journey. Increasing search and rescue patrols and breaking up smuggling gangs and destroying their boats is a good place to start but issues need to be addressed in Syria, Eritrean, Gambia, Libya and Senegal as well so that people feel safe at home.
We all want a better life for our children and when we ask our beneficiaries why they want to undertake this journey it is for that reason. Encourage those around you to not go and work to protect, inform and act to save the lives of those in need before they decide to take this journey

ⁱ New York Times. "What is Behind the Surge of Refugees Crossing the Mediterranean?" April 23, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/04/20/world/europe/surge-in-refugees-crossing-the-mediterranean-sea-maps.html?smid=fb-nytimes&smtyp=cur&bicmp=AD&bicmlukp=WT.mc_id&bicmst=1409232722000&bicmet=1419773522000

ⁱⁱ ARDD-Legal Aid Research

ⁱⁱⁱ ARDD-Legal Aid Research

^{iv} Swiss Refugee Council. "Asylum Procedure and Reception Condition in Italy." May 2011. http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&category=&publisher=SWISS_RC&type=&coi=ITA&rid=&docid=4e2699b92&skip=0.

^v Lind, Dara. Vox. The right to asylum: Why Europe has to take in migrants fleeing persecution <http://www.vox.com/2015/4/22/8464623/asylum-refugees-law-europe>