



ARDD-LEGAL AID
Arab Renaissance for
Democracy & Development

Don't Go... Protect, Inform, Act



Protect, Inform, Act

November 2014



Mohammad and Mahmud felt that they had no choice.* Without work, a proper home and food, any other option seemed better. Two forged passports, \$10,000 each to traffickers, and 1,000 miles later, after barely escaping death every step of the way, they are both in detention centers. One is in Great Britain and the other in Switzerland, it does not seem as though it is a better option but to them there was no choice.

In 2014 alone, over 75,000 people have crossed the Mediterranean on their way to European shores.² These people are fleeing war zones, economic instability, political turmoil, extreme poverty and they have but one hope: a better life for their children. Europe is seen as the best of all worlds. A place where any person no matter their background they can survive and thrive. But this projection is a farce; European policy is quickly becoming stricter. Migrants end up leaving one hell only to end up behind bars in what they thought would be a land of safety and stability. Europe has quickly become the most dangerous destination in the world for migrants.¹

The Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD)-Legal Aid has conducted extensive research on this issue with the help of the beneficiaries from the Syrian Lawyers' Initiative. Through the provision of free legal assistance and capacity building projects such as the Syrian Lawyers' Initiative, ARDD-Legal Aid is able to inform refugees and migrants of their rights and reduce fraud. By continuing to raise awareness of the dangers of issues such as illegal migration, ARDD-Legal Aid works to protect vulnerable groups across Jordan.

High Costs and High Stakes:

The journey to Europe is long and extremely treacherous. Smugglers charge \$5,000-\$10,000 per route to get an individual to Europe, without any guarantees. Shifting security situations have changes the most popular routes, rerouting migrants from Algeria to Libya. The routes can take anywhere from 2-6 weeks as treks across the desert to the coast risk the danger of kidnapping and theft. There are often reports of people going missing when they cross the border as human traffickers look for small groups and individuals to steal from and hold for ransom.³

Human trafficking is a \$7 billion a year business and the traffickers that escort these migrants on their way to Europe are some of the most ruthless in the world. The routes can take anywhere from 2-12 weeks with groups of 10-15 people to travel together to reduce the risk of abduction by human traffickers. The remoteness of the route taken to avoid abduction may take travelers weeks longer than originally anticipated, leaving many without sufficient food or water. Bandits along the way attempt to kidnap and steal money from the migrants and often the traffickers themselves coordinate with bandits to rob entire groups of people. Traffickers often beat the migrants, confiscate mobile phones, and withhold food and water until the migrants are completely dependent on them. Migrants feel they must continue this journey because they have paid their life savings to these traffickers and have

*Names changed for protection

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limited options of survival in the desert. Along this journey, death rates are extremely high but are not tracked because of the danger in acquiring this data.⁴

Crossing the Mediterranean can take anywhere between 1-4 days depending on the weather and condition of the boat. Boats are generally in poor condition and overcrowded. There are often reports of people dying due to suffocation in the hulls as they pile atop one another so the smugglers get as much money as possible for each voyage.

The majority of those who undertake this journey have high levels of education as they believe the European Union will be more likely to grant their asylum. These tend to be males who leave their families at home but bring their sons on the journey. In 2014, over 6,300 children have been intercepted traveling unaccompanied on the sea to Italy as traffickers with questionable motives often provide free passage to children.⁵

The objective of all of this is protection and asylum, a guarantee that migrants can be reunited with their families and provide for them. This is undoubtedly an objective and a guarantee that most all humans would admire. But on the shores of Europe, death is a more likely end.

From Jordan to Nowhere:

Jordanian NGO, Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD)-Legal Aid began to compile research on this issue, specifically on the routes that migrants are taking from Jordan. After observing many colleagues and beneficiaries attempt these routes and ending up in detention centers across Europe, ARDD-Legal Aid began conducting interviews to better understand the reasons why people leave, the routes that they take and the dangers that they face.

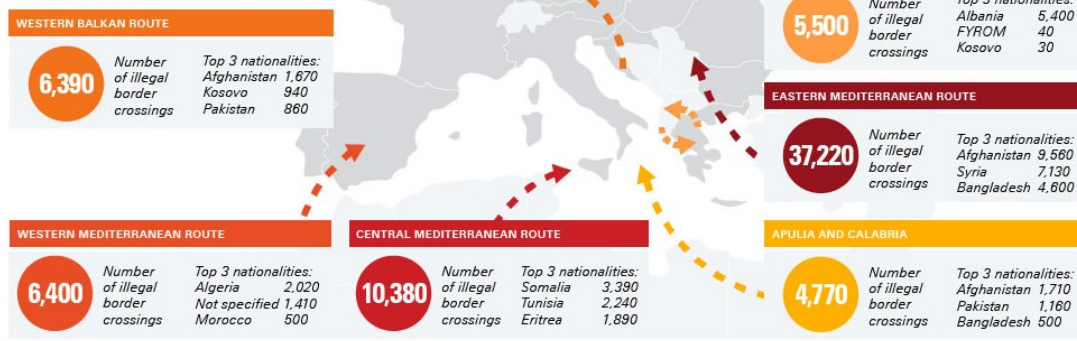
For many leaving from Jordan the starting destination is Algeria, where a visa at the airport is not required for refugees and forged passports (which many refugees have acquired at the cost of \$1,500-\$2,000) are not often caught at the airport. Upon arrival, the traffickers work as a chain, delivering 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.⁶ Libya's lack of coast guard make this an ideal departure spot as migrant boats will not get caught and sent back before they reach international or European waters.

Alternatively, many migrants leave from Egyptian shores attempting to reach Italy. These boats are known to be some of the most crowded with an average of 350 migrants per boat and cost around \$2,000 per migrant. However, the risk of being caught by Egyptian authorities is quite high as they routinely patrol the coast to catch migrant boats headed to Europe.

Others arrive in Turkey where they can enter the country without a visa. From Turkey migrants attempt to cross the sea to Greece where this year 10,080 people have been apprehended.⁷ This route takes \$1,500 when taken by a rubber boat or \$2,500 and a half hour by speed boat or \$3,500 on a yacht which has the highest probability of making it alive. Security in Greece is becoming increasingly tight and for this reason Italy is becoming the fastest growing destination for migrants crossing illegally to. However, routes from Turkey to Italy via the Mediterranean are not often used. This route is known to be one of the most expensive and uncomfortable as it is taken on freight ships. For these reasons, Turkey to Greece routes are more popular than Turkey to Italy route.

IMMIGRATION ROUTES INTO THE EU BY LAND AND SEA

Most migrants enter the EU through international airports; most of those living in the EU illegally originally entered with valid documents but then overstayed on a visa. Many others though enter via land and sea routes; the estimated numbers of those who entered in 2012 are shown below.



-CNN

Don't Go-the Sea Beyond:

Most traffickers promise migrants a speed boat to take them to the other side of the Mediterranean yet these promises are not often kept. Boats that take migrants across the sea tend to be wooden or rubber and traffickers attempt to fit as many people as possible to earn the maximum price per journey. Traffickers openly say they care less about the lives of migrants and more about the money, that to them migrants are just commodities.⁸ In September 2014 off the coast of Malta, traffickers got into an argument with the boat of over 500 Syrians, Egyptians and Sudanese people. Whatever the argument was about, it ended with the boat of traffickers ramming the boat of migrants, capsizing the boat and killing 500 individuals who were trapped on the boat without life vests, most of which did not know how to swim.⁹ Stories like this seem extreme but occur often, as the boats that sink often do so with all that are on board.

In 2014 alone, out of the 75,000 migrants that have been apprehended along the coast, over 3,000 deaths have been reported. These deaths occur because of overcrowding and the poor conditions of the boats. Most traffickers, in an effort to get more money, charge extra for life vests when migrants arrive at the port. With dwindling funds, most migrants are not able to pay for this vest nor do they know the importance of using one.¹⁰

The boats are often old and rickety where people report taking shifts to bail the water out of the boat for the entire journey. For most people that take this journey, this is their first exposure to large bodies of water and most have never swum before. For most the destination is Lampedusa a small Italian island off the coast of Libya. It is here that over 60,000 people have arrived in 2014 and is the main reason that Italy receives the most migrants and sees the most deaths on its shores.¹¹ Second to this is Greece where over 10,080 people have been rescued off of its islands in the summer of 2014.¹²



Massimo Sestini- Esquire Magazine

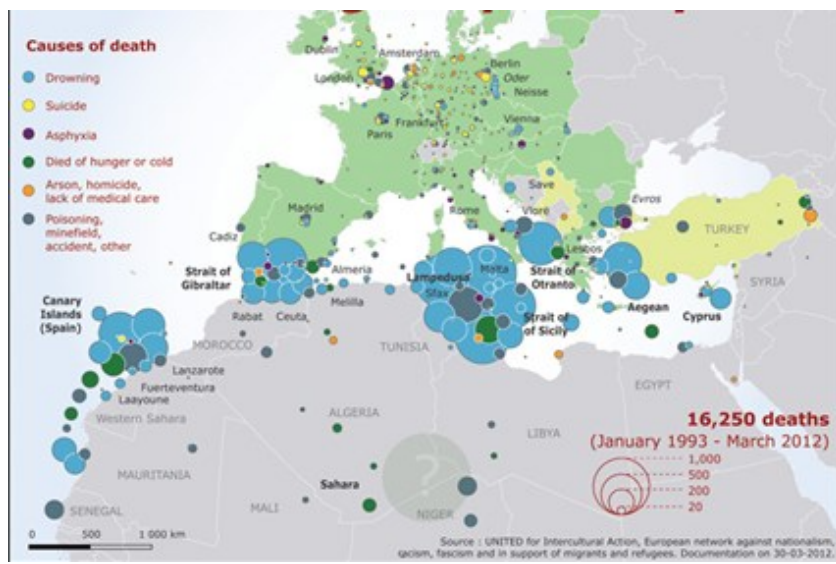
Upon Arrival:

Migrant boats are met at the shores of Europe by the Mare Nostrum mission, the coastal protection operation implemented by Frontex, the EU's border protection agency. In 2014, they have intercepted over 90,000 people and brought them safely in Europe. However, as of November 1, 2014 the Mare Nostrum operation is ending and there is no replacement to intercept migrants as they reach the shores or if boats fail in the waters of the Mediterranean.¹³

In addition to this, racism in Europe has been growing. Far right extremist parties have been consistently on the rise over the past decade, being elected to governments across the continent. New migrants frequently face persecution at the hands of their traffickers and the officials receiving them. Once migrants arrive in Europe they are faced with an uphill battle in their quest for asylum and protection. In 2014, UNHCR's high commissioner Antonio Guterres said the rise of xenophobia in Europe was deeply worrying and the recently passed strict laws on migration only reinforced this concern, saying "Globally, we need a system that welcomes diversity, and that shares the benefits of globalization more widely. That means cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination, and concerted efforts to identify opportunities for legal migration."¹⁴

If these migrants are able to make it to Europe, most are intercepted by the border patrol, which immediately places these asylum seekers in detention centers across Europe. In Italy, which in 2014 has seen of 60,000 migrants intercepted off the coast, 11 detention centers (CIEs) are spread across the country. These centers hold immigrants as they wait for deportation or asylum, a process that can take up to ten years. Five of the 11 CIEs have had to be redone since 2012 when major riots over the conditions of the center, broke out. Italy first implemented the centers in the late 1990s when immigration across the Mediterranean increased exponentially. The centers were opened to deter migrants from attempting to reach the Italian coast and to raise deportation rates, but it is believed that since they were opened, only 50% of the migrants that have arrived in Italy have been deported.¹⁵ Rights

within the camps are also often called into question and in May 2011, multiple refugee agencies, most notably the Swiss Refugee Council, released a statement condemning the conditions and disciplinary action that takes place within the CIEs.¹⁶



The Way Forward:

To ensure that refugees and migrants are safe in the quest to form a new home and establish a better life for them and their children, ARDD-Legal Aid has three main recommendations.

1. Protect: protection and asylum must be provided. As of this year the developing world is hosting 80% of the world's refugees. Around the shores of the Mediterranean are some of the world's biggest areas of conflict and famine. Those who are seeking asylum in the European Union are doing so because they have barely escaped death in their home countries. The international community must provide lasting solutions and protection to these people.¹⁷ Strengthening rescue operations at sea. With the end of the Mare Nostrum program by the European Union, the chances of migrants being rescued has dwindled. To prevent mass deaths in 2015, the European Union should develop a strategy to rescue those in need in the Mediterranean.

2. Inform: the dangers of risky and illegal migration must be widely known and shared. Dissemination of the information about the services and rights that are available to all people is essential to creating welcoming and cohesive environments.

3. Act: All stakeholders must act to decrease the practice of illegal migration for vulnerable people by creating policies that benefit and build upon their existing resilience.

¹ ARDD-Legal Aid Research. October 2014.

² Mark Rice-Oxley and Mona Mahmood. "Migrants' Tales" Oct. 20, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/20/-sp-migrants-ales-asylum-sea-mediterranean>. Accessed October 2014.

³ ARDD-Legal Aid Research. October 2014

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ UNHCR. "So Close, Yet so Far from Safety." Sept. 2014. <http://www.unhcr.org/542c07e39.html>. Accessed October 2014.

⁶ ARDD-Legal Aid Research. October 2014.

⁷ UNHCR. "Urgent: European Action Needed to Stop Rising Refugee and Migrant Deaths at Sea." July 2014. <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=53d0cbb26&query=migrant%20boats>. Accessed October 2014.

⁸ ARDD-Legal Aid Research. October 2014.

⁹ Associated Press. "500 Migrant Workers Feared Dead After Human Traffickers Ram Their Boat." Sept. 2014. <http://mashable.com/2014/09/15/500-migrant-workers-feared-dead/>. Accessed October 2014.

¹⁰ UNHCR. "So Close, Yet so Far from Safety." Sept. 2014. <http://www.unhcr.org/542c07e39.html>. Accessed October 2014.

¹¹ Zed Nelson. Lampedusa Boat Tragedy: A Survivor's Story. March 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/22/lampedusa-boat-tragedy-migrants-africa>. Accessed October 2014.

¹² UNHCR. "Urgent: European Action Needed to Stop Rising Refugee and Migrant Deaths at Sea." July 2014. <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=53d0cbb26&query=migrant%20boats>. Accessed October 2014.

¹³ European Union. October 2014. <http://marenostrumproject.eu/>. Accessed October 2014.

¹⁴ Antonio Guterres. Rise of Xenophobia in Europe 'Deeply Worrying-UN Refugee Chief. June 2014. <http://www.trust.org/item/20140603093115-ycbw7/>. Accessed October 2014.

¹⁵ Elisabetta Povoledo. "Italy's Migrant Detention Centers Are Cruel, Rights Groups Say." June 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/05/world/europe/italys-migrant-detention-centers-are-cruel-rights-groups-say.html?pagewanted=all>. Accessed October 2014.

¹⁶ 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=IT&rid=&docid=4e2699b92&skip=0. Accessed October 2014.

¹⁷ UNHCR. "So Close, Yet so Far from Safety." Sept. 2014. <http://www.unhcr.org/542c07e39.html>. Accessed October 2014.

