



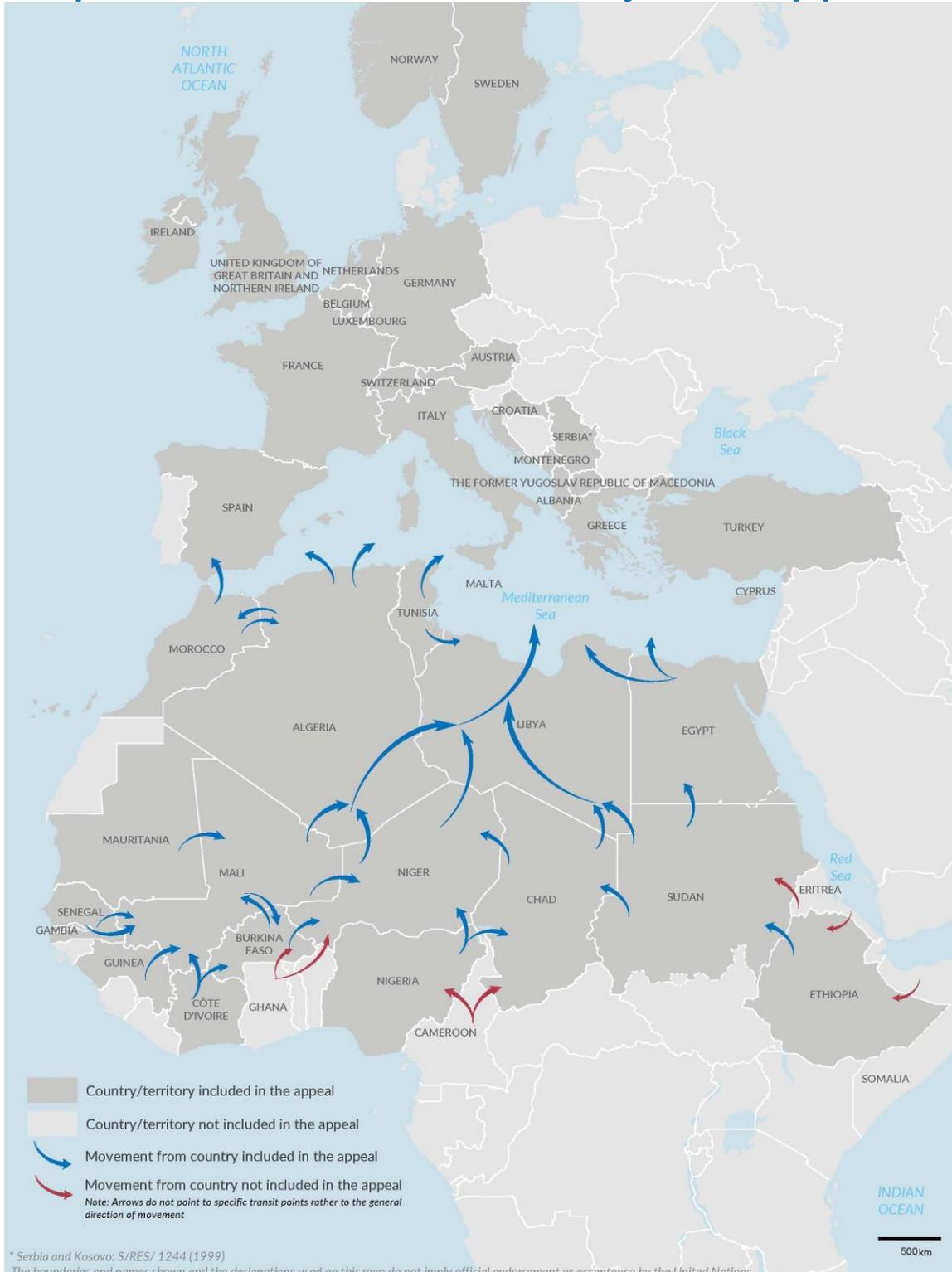
UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE SITUATION

Supplementary Appeal
January - December 2018

Map of the area covered by this appeal



Overview

Refugees and migrants continue to move in large numbers from Sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa and across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe.

Libya remains the main point of departure for the majority of refugees and migrants from Africa hoping to reach Europe.

While on the move, refugees and migrants face intolerably **high risks of grave human rights violations and death.**

UNHCR is rolling out a **three-pronged cross-regional strategy** with broad objectives and selected activities in the countries of origin and transit in Sub-Saharan Africa, and countries in North Africa and Europe.

In order to assist an estimated **656,280 people of concern** by the end 2018, **UNHCR is appealing for \$226.6 million** for January to December 2018



124,711

People have crossed the central Mediterranean between January 2017 to March 2018 towards Italy



2,873

People died or reported missing at sea in the central Mediterranean in 2017



15,779

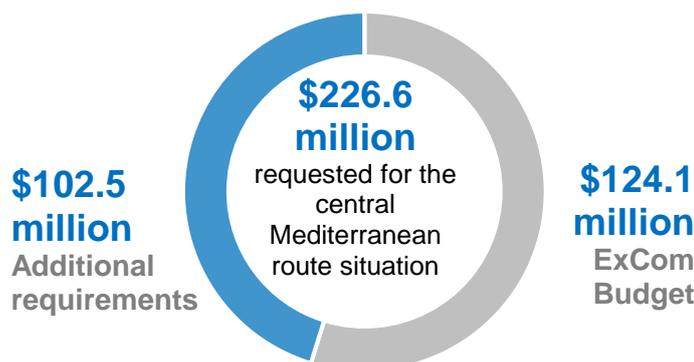
Unaccompanied children arrived in Italy in 2017



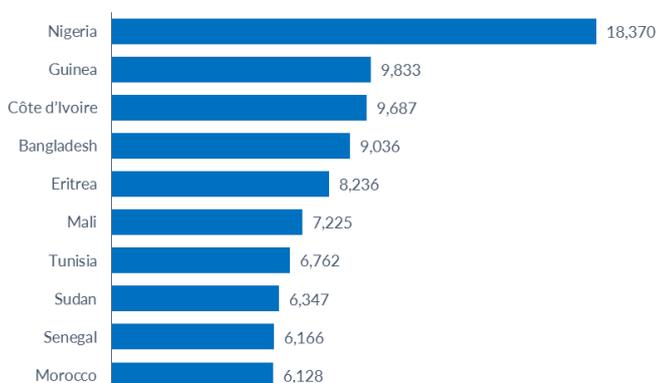
278,000

People of concern are in need of resettlement in the 15 priority countries* of asylum for the central Mediterranean situation

Financial requirements



Top ten nationalities arriving to Italy by sea
From January 2017 to January 2018



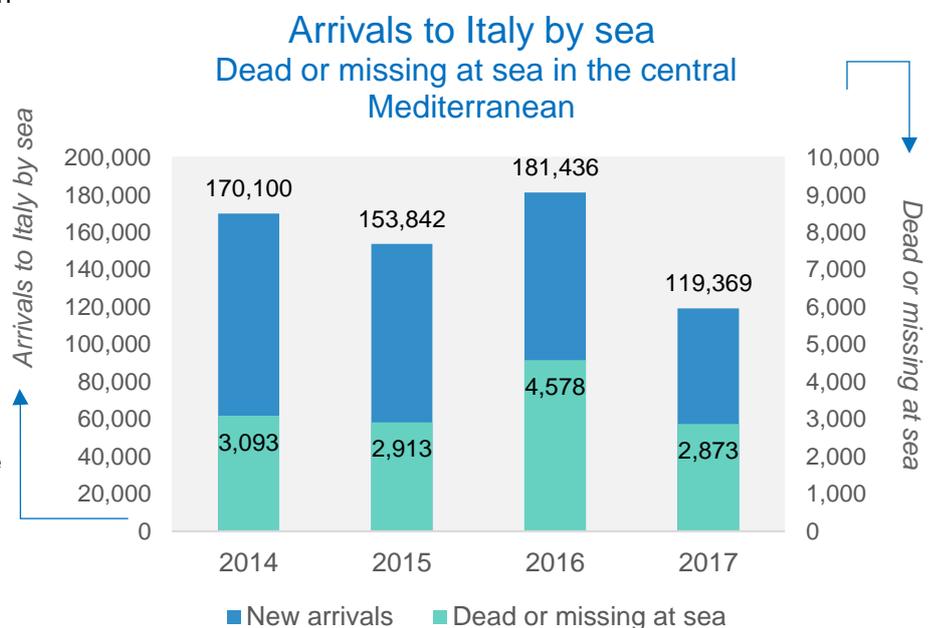
Source: UNHCR

*The 15 priority countries for resettlement (specifically) include Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Niger and Sudan.

Introduction

The central Mediterranean route, from Sub-Saharan Africa to Italy, **is one of the most active and dangerous, currently accounting for the largest number of people crossing to Europe by sea.** Libya remains the main point of departure for the majority of refugees and migrants from Africa seeking to reach Europe. These mixed movements include people fleeing persecution, conflict and violence as well as those looking for better economic and social opportunities, including means to support family members at home. Many are not headed to Libya or Europe when they initially leave their country of origin, while others are ultimately trafficked to Europe.

Despite a significant decrease in arrivals in Europe in 2017, refugees and migrants continue to put themselves at grave risk, both on land and at sea, in their attempts to reach Europe. In 2017, **an estimated 2,800 refugees and migrants perished or went missing in the central Mediterranean Sea.** It is estimated that many more have died on their way crossing the desert and before attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea, due to the many dangers faced along the routes and in Libya.



The lack of appropriate asylum systems and prospects for solutions for people in need of international protection—including voluntary repatriation, resettlement, local integration and other legal pathways—as well as the reduced assistance standards in several asylum countries and the weak protection environment compels many of them to move onwards. The majority of refugees and migrants arriving in Italy by sea are from Sub-Saharan Africa. Between January and December 2017, **11 per cent of the total arrivals were from East and Horn of Africa, while approximately 41 per cent were from West Africa and 10 per cent from North Africa.**

While many refugee-hosting countries have continued showing remarkable commitment and generosity towards those in need of international protection, their capacities are overstretched. In some instances, protection space has diminished and serious gaps have emerged in asylum and reception systems.

With the underlying factors compelling people to undertake such dangerous journeys remaining largely unaddressed, it is highly likely that the central Mediterranean route will continue to be active in 2018. Illustrating this, since January 2018, about 5,300 refugees and migrants arrived in Italy via this route. Accordingly, UNHCR and its partners will need to work with States to continue **providing international protection and assistance as well as greater access to solutions, including safe and legal pathways.**

In this context, and as presented in this Supplementary Appeal, UNHCR is rolling out **a three-pronged cross-regional strategy** with broad objectives and selected activities **in the countries of origin and transit in Sub-Saharan Africa, in Libya and North Africa countries, in transit countries and in Europe.**

Recognizing the complexity of mixed movements today, **UNHCR will support, wherever possible, measures that reduce the risk for people undertaking these dangerous journeys, working to enhance protection and solution opportunities in countries of origin and transit.**

UNHCR will aim to increase options for legal pathways towards safety as well as

improve the protection space available for asylum-seekers and refugees. UNHCR will also seek to strengthen synergy with activities implemented by other organizations such as IOM, UNICEF and those NGOs responding to the needs of refugees and migrants using the same route.

This Supplementary Appeal presents UNHCR's strategic objectives, priorities and financial requirements for its response to mixed movements. UNHCR is seeking **\$226.6 million, including \$102.5 million in additional financial requirements from January to December 2018.**



Emergency aid for refugees, migrants and internally displaced in Sabratha, Libya. © UNHCR

Summary of financial requirements

UNHCR's Executive Committee (ExCom) budget for the central Mediterranean route situation in 2018 was \$124,164,859. To address the increasing protection needs of people of concern, UNHCR has established a supplementary budget for the requirements presented in this appeal, amounting to **\$102.5 million**. The total revised 2018 requirements for the central Mediterranean situation now amount to **\$226.6 million**, including support costs.

While Greece remains part of the situation, it has not been included in this appeal because a majority of its needs are expected to be covered by earmarked contributions. UNHCR's 2018 ExCom budget for Greece amounts to **\$232,766,204**.

Priorities for resource mobilization

UNHCR takes as basic principles in its fundraising that funds be raised first and foremost for prioritized activities, and that the funds raised are as flexible as possible given the range of locations, contexts and themes of its activities. Based on this, the preferences for income would be as follows.

- **Unearmarked funding** is the priority for resource mobilization. Contributed without restrictions on its use, un-earmarked funding allows UNHCR the critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees and other populations of concern in the greatest need and at the greatest risk.
- Secondly, funding which is **broadly earmarked at the situational or regional level**: meaning, funding that can be used across the range of countries and activities in a given region or situation in accordance with the priorities and activities identified by UNHCR.
- Thirdly, funding which is **earmarked at the country or operational level**. Funding of this type allows UNHCR to allocate funding to its planned activities within a country in a context specific manner.
- Fourthly, funding which is **earmarked to the sectoral or thematic level**. This is the most restrictive level of funding.
- Ideally, all funds raised should be **flexible in their implementation period**; meaning, UNHCR should be able to carry funds to the following year. This will enable the smooth continuation of activities, make operations more predictable, and avoid situations of UNHCR receiving funds it may not be able to spend within the calendar year.

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE SITUATION					
OPERATION	ExCom budget not related to the central Mediterranean route situation	ExCom Budget related to the central Mediterranean route situation	Additional requirements	Total	Total revised requirements
Belgium Regional Office	21,446,484	1,477,729	-	1,477,729	22,924,214
Bosnia and Herzegovina Regional Office	28,774,449	16,255,053	-	16,255,053	45,029,501
Hungary Regional Office	12,489,347	3,246,851	-	3,246,851	15,736,198
Italy Regional Office	22,952,316	8,040,243	-	8,040,243	30,992,559
Sweden Regional Office	5,206,714	73,721	-	73,721	5,280,435
Turkey	424,637,626	11,429,851	-	11,429,851	436,067,478
Europe regional activities	14,579,224	10,310,192	-	10,310,192	24,889,416
EUROPE Total	530,086,161	50,833,640	-	50,833,640	580,919,801
Algeria	35,481,053	775,000	-	775,000	36,256,053
Egypt	70,402,452	4,066,202	-	4,066,202	74,468,654
Libya	23,365,630	8,093,419	53,540,949	61,634,368	84,999,998
Morocco	6,349,546	400,000	1,000,000	1,400,000	7,749,546
Tunisia	4,752,606	783,237	-	783,237	5,535,843
Mauritania	19,326,354	-	767,840	767,840	20,094,194
Middle East and North Africa regional activities	116,343,676	1,120,000	2,997,300	4,117,300	120,460,976
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA Total	276,021,318	15,237,087	58,306,089	73,543,946	349,565,264
Burkina Faso	19,057,961	2,793,035	2,800,000	5,593,035	24,650,996
Chad	141,028,344	7,960,400	-	7,960,400	148,988,744
Ethiopia	301,426,599	33,378,076	-	33,378,076	334,804,676
Mali	18,103,089	1,500,000	1,500,000	3,000,000	21,103,089
Niger	65,810,299	-	19,973,516	19,973,516	85,783,815
Senegal Regional Office	29,502,175	-	9,681,501	9,681,501	39,183,676
Sudan	248,220,168	7,678,631	-	7,678,631	255,898,799
AFRICA Total	823,148,635	53,310,142	33,955,017	87,265,159	910,413,794
Headquarters	283,491,439	4,787,220	3,768,973	8,556,193	292,047,632
SUBTOTAL	1,919,288,561	124,164,859	96,030,078	220,194,938	2,139,483,499
Support costs (7 per cent)	-	-	6,458,277	6,458,277	6,458,277
TOTAL	1,919,288,561	124,164,859	102,488,356	226,653,216	2,145,941,776

Planning assumptions

- 1 Demographic pressures, protracted and new conflicts and violence, persecution, human rights abuses, poverty and inequality, environmental hazards and fragility will continue to push people into undertaking risky journeys in search of protection and economic opportunities from countries of origin into neighbouring countries, and further onward to countries outside their region.
- 2 Displacement and irregular migration in large movements presents complex challenges to affected countries and may contribute to further destabilizing already fragile political and economic environments, as well as fuel illicit activity such as smuggling and trafficking.
- 3 A comprehensive approach is required, addressing the drivers and root causes of large movements of refugees and migrants, while also responding to the protection needs of people on the move and offering viable alternatives to irregular movements.
- 4 Countries of first asylum and transit along the central Mediterranean route need considerable and sustained investment and support to effectively respond to the needs of those on the move and provide for their protection.
- 5 UNHCR's mandate to protect refugees and its operational presence across the regions can benefit the design and application of a comprehensive cross-border protection and solutions strategy on mixed movements, as well as facilitate dialogue and cooperation between multiple stakeholders.
- 6 Transnational criminal activities related to these movements, such as smuggling and trafficking, require a transnational response by all actors, not only to combat criminal activity but to ensure the protection of victims of trafficking. UNHCR's experience in addressing trafficking of people under its mandate through inter-agency referral systems is a key component of the response.
- 7 Reinforced border control measures could lead to the development of additional migratory routes, with increased protection risks and possible shifts in movements towards other countries such as Egypt and Morocco.
- 8 The return of the irregular migrants to their countries of origin, if accompanied by sustainable reintegration measures, related information campaigns and strong investments in countries of origin will be continued. The evacuation of refugees from Libya, resettlement efforts in all countries of first asylum/transit, as well as the development of some complementary pathways for refugees will be enhanced. These measures may contribute to a gradual reduction of the flows towards Libya and better management of population movements.

Strategic overview

In line with its mandate, the whole-of-society approach underlying the New York Declaration, and taking into consideration the progress achieved in the application of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), UNHCR aims at:

- Mitigating identified protection risks along the route and enhancing the protection space available in transit countries, including through community-based protection.
- Identifying effective solutions in countries of asylum, origin and transit.
- Finding safe and legal alternatives to irregular movements.
- Empowering people to make informed decisions by informing them of risks and available protection and solutions options as well as improving communication with communities.
- Strengthening partnerships and coordination with States and others, including through targeted capacity-building activities.

The comprehensive approach taken by UNHCR, covering all three geographic regions, is **unique** in that it takes into account the numerous challenges in each one of them as well as those which are cross-regional, offering concrete and mutually reinforcing measures in all operations covered by the strategy and this Supplementary Appeal.

Response

Sub-Saharan Africa



260,000

Resettlement needs in the nine Sub-Saharan Africa priority countries* of asylum

3%

Resettlement needs met 2017



268,400

People of concern targeted for assistance by end of 2018

78%

Protection rate** in 2017 for East and Horn Africa nationalities among top 10 arriving in Italy by sea



26%

Protection rate** in 2017 for West Africa nationalities among top 10 arriving in Italy by sea

**From Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Niger and Sudan.*

***This includes subsidiary protection as well as humanitarian status.*

Countries of origin

Mixed movements have in recent years become one of the most challenging operational contexts within which complex protection issues have arisen. The drivers and root causes of these movements are many and varied, such as underdevelopment, poverty, human rights violations, climate change, conflicts, violence and persecution, as well as political and social issues. For certain groups, preventive actions in countries of origin can play a critical role in addressing the root causes of displacement or drivers of migration. If fully informed on the dangers and provided with alternative options, people who otherwise are likely to resort to dangerous and irregular movements may choose other opportunities. Equally important is the provision of tailor-made solutions for those not in need of international protection who have suffered exploitation and abuse along migratory routes and who wish to return.

Key intervention areas

- A key component in UNHCR's **awareness-raising** efforts is the increased engagement of the diaspora, as well as its leverage on migration-related issues such as remittances and mixed movement dynamics.
- In its attempts to decrease vulnerabilities and to prevent and reduce statelessness, UNHCR will advocate for and offer technical expertise to strengthen national capacities for continuous **civil status registration** and the provision of easily accessible identification and travel documents. Coordination with States, ECOWAS and the EU will remain key in this area.
- UNHCR will continue actively advocating to strengthen the national capacities of countries of origin to provide **consular protection** to all people not in need of international protection who are stranded along the route to Europe.
- Jointly with relevant partners, and through systems with adequate protection safeguards, UNHCR will assist in the identification and referral of cases for whom **assisted voluntary repatriation and reintegration** is the best option, including through facilitated access to labour markets and social systems.
- Specific national groups or people from specific geographical areas within a country are often more likely to embark on dangerous migratory journeys than others. UNHCR will advocate with bilateral and multilateral donors that the underlying socio-economic **drivers of migration** are systematically included in relevant development programming, including the UNDAF.

Key recent achievements

At a dialogue held in January 2018—*Fostering Mutual Understanding and Common Approaches between Countries of Origin in West Africa and European Countries of Destination*—jointly organized by UNHCR and Chatham House, an open and constructive exchange took place on five themes: **civil registration and documentation; protection and solutions for unaccompanied and separated children; transnational programming for victims of trafficking; collection and dissemination of information on missing people; and the diaspora's role and influence in the current dynamics of mixed movements.** A set of recommendations have been agreed upon which provide important guidance for tackling these complex cross-border issues.

UNHCR has continued its engagement with the Government of Eritrea on family reunification for a number of **unaccompanied and separated children** in countries in the region, in accordance with international applicable standards.

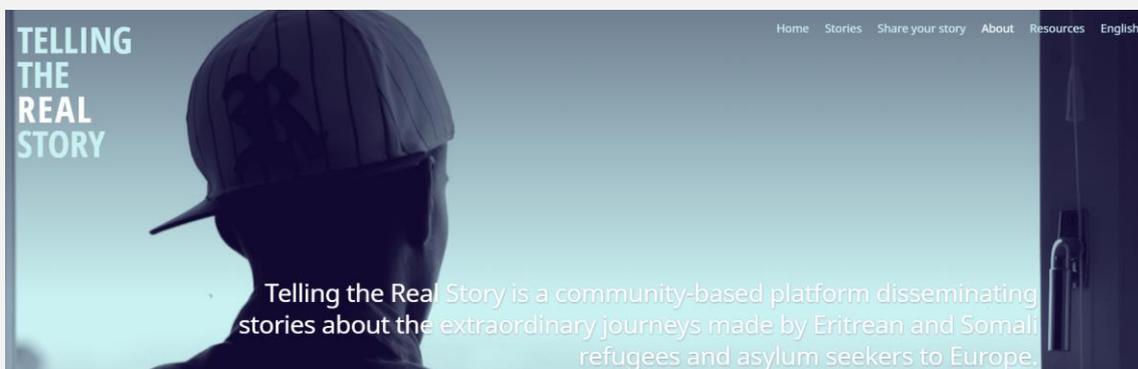
In a regional strategic meeting on the central Mediterranean route organized by UNHCR in Senegal in December 2017, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders agreed on a set of recommendations for activities led by governments, UNHCR and regional bodies.

Continuous challenges

- With the exception of the Gambia, **none of the current conflicts on the African continent were brought to a peaceful conclusion in 2017**. In many countries of origin the opposite has occurred. Continuous outflows of refugees and few or no returns to countries of origin are therefore a likely scenario.
- **Gaps remain in the provision of reintegration programmes** for people not in need of international protection returning from Libya. Past experience shows that returnees with specific needs, including victims of trafficking, are at a heightened risk of being re-trafficked. The lack of any protection safeguards for some of the nationalities assisted to voluntarily return from Libya will continue to lead to situations of internal displacement and to new onward movements as people seek protection elsewhere.
- Most UNDAF frameworks do not yet include the **causes and consequences of mixed movements** in development plans and further coordination between bilateral and multilateral donors is necessary to address the socio-economic components of irregular population movements.

Communicating with communities: telling the real story

While they may know that journeys are dangerous, many refugees do not understand these dangers fully, and often have highly unrealistic expectations about life in Europe and the complexity of asylum procedures. **Telling the Real Story** is a platform where refugees share their experiences and inform their communities about the realities and risks of undertaking dangerous journeys. *More detailed information on personal experiences from people is available at <http://tellingtherealstory.org>.*



Countries of first asylum and transit

The lack of effective protection in countries of first asylum and transit leaves refugees often with little option other than moving onwards. This includes not only adequate reception conditions and efficient asylum procedures but also access to basic services, such as for health and education, opportunities for self-reliance and socio-economic inclusion, and at least some prospects for eventually obtaining a durable solution to the displacement situation.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, there will be targeted activities in three countries in the Horn of Africa namely, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan, and four countries in the West and the Central Africa region, in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger.

Key intervention areas

- One of the central components of UNHCR's strategy in these countries to strengthen effective protection in countries of first asylum and transit is through ensuring **unhindered access to asylum, efficient refugee status determination procedures and improved reception conditions**—including the availability of temporary accommodation and related services. This includes capacity building, counselling, establishment of effective referral mechanisms and response through inclusion in national protection systems, especially for unaccompanied and separated children. Protection and border monitoring, search and rescue operations along land routes, especially in desert areas, and protection sensitive border management will also be pursued.
- While UNHCR will continue its work on the provision of basic services, the **socio-economic inclusion of refugees** in their host countries and the corresponding **support to host communities** is of increasing importance to sustainable refugee protection. Where possible, UNHCR will advocate for the reinforcement of refugee's access to national systems in areas such as health and education, which is often the most cost efficient and sustainable approach. Development financing will be critical in the strengthening of national institutions and related policies.
- In addition to resettlement, **access to safe and regulated pathways to third countries** could, for a significant portion of refugees, reduce the incentive to embark on dangerous irregular travel. This includes humanitarian visas, private and/or community sponsorship programmes, family reunification, labour mobility schemes, scholarships and education programmes, as well as regional mobility schemes.
- In close collaboration with IOM and other concerned organizations, **targeted mass information programmes** will inform people of the risks associated with irregular movement to Libya and Europe and provide information on alternatives available *sur place*, through designated information centres and at key points along the route.

Key recent achievements

In Niger, UNHCR has actively pursued its **outreach strategy** for asylum-seekers in mixed movements, providing information on the asylum procedures and offering technical support in the strengthening and decentralization of the national refugee status determination process. A “One-stop-shop” (“*Guichet unique*”) in Niamey, temporary accommodation for asylum-seekers and a toll free hot line allows asylum-seekers and refugees to access services and referral mechanisms directly.

UNHCR’s temporary **evacuation transit facility (ETM)** for refugees evacuated from Libya started operating in Niamey on November 2017. As of 4 March 2018, some 1,060 people have been received in these facilities, of which 93 have been submitted for resettlement. UNHCR is now working with the authorities in the development of a purpose-built transit facility. **Reception facilities** are also being established in Agadez, in the north of the country.

In support of migrants wishing to return home, UNHCR is referring cases coming to its attention to IOM for consideration under their **assisted voluntary return and reintegration programme**.

In Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Mali and Sudan, UNHCR has conducted a series of training and **capacity-building activities**, offered technical and material support to authorities, provided legal counselling and assistance and launched mass information campaigns on the dangers of irregular journeys. In several countries, strengthening of reception capacity and related services, as well as improvements to the status determination systems are also underway, as per the recommendations reached with all ECOWAS countries in Dakar on 7 December 2017.

Continuous challenges

- The general **security developments** in a number of countries, such as the increased number of security incidents targeting the military and civilians in Mali, Niger and Nigeria, are giving rise to concern and limiting UNHCR’s access and operational presence in a number of areas.
- Despite efforts on all sides, ensuring a smooth and predictable **resettlement** in-take through the ETM, accessing **family reunion procedure** for eligible refugees and developing differentiated solutions for unaccompanied and separated children remains challenging. **Complementary pathways** out of first countries of asylum are either inexistent or slow, and contribute only marginally to responsibility-sharing between states.
- Significant progress has been made on the inclusion of development actors in addressing forced displacement, in particular the recent decision by the World Bank to make available an especially dedicated funding window for refugees and host communities under its IDA18

financing instrument. **However, many multilateral and bilateral donors have yet to adopt a more inclusive approach to development financing in response to forced displacement situations.** Community stabilization projects funded under the EU trade facilitation agreement or bilaterally will require a certain time to show concrete results.

- Reduced levels of assistance—including decreased food security—are serious push factors for refugee or IDP populations in a number of fragile environments along the mixed movement routes.

Trafficking among the most serious protection risks along the central Mediterranean route

“You will die for nothing. If you stay, every day they are coming to do bad things to you. One day, one day, one day, they will kill you.”

- A migrant on his experiences

Plucked from the Mediterranean by the Italian Coast Guard, refugees and migrants warn of forced labour and slavery.

Mamoudou Oba from Guinea, who was rescued after days in a drifting vessel, has warned others trying to flee poverty and conflict in sub-Saharan Africa of the dangers of the land and sea routes to Europe. Sitting among a group of 99 people rescued by the Italian Coast Guard, he says people are being bought and sold for as little as \$300. He had been kidnapped, starved and beaten for three weeks before leaving Libya.



Refugees and migrants rest on the deck of the 'Dattilo', an Italian Coast Guard patrol vessel. © UNHCR/V. TANIA

Libya and North Africa



18,000

Resettlement needs in the six priority countries of asylum in North Africa*

12%

Resettlement needs in the region fulfilled in 2017



173,700

People of concern targeted for assistance by end of 2018



11%

Protection rate** in 2017 for North African nationalities among top 10 arriving in Italy by sea

*From Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

**This includes subsidiary protection as well as humanitarian status.

Mixed movements continue through North Africa, where the number of urban refugees and asylum-seekers—and the complexity of their situation—continues to increase. In addition to being transit countries, North African States are increasingly becoming destination points. Refugees and asylum-seekers in urban areas are affected by the difficult economic situation and lack of access to employment opportunities, leaving the most vulnerable almost fully dependent on assistance. In the absence of effective access to protection and long-term solutions, many move onwards falling victim to smugglers and traffickers. With restricted access to main entry, transit and departure points, a key challenge for the operations concerns the identification and processing of people in need of international protection.

Libya remains the main point of departure for those attempting the perilous journey across the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. There are an estimated 48,000 asylum-seekers and refugees in Libya who have been registered with UNHCR. Women and children account for 58 per cent and 11 per cent respectively, of the registered population. In February alone, UNHCR registered 2,350 refugees and asylum-seekers from Sudan (64 per cent), Syria (12 per cent), Eritrea (11 per cent), Somalia (6 per cent), Ethiopia (5 per cent), State of Palestine (1 per cent), and South Sudan (1 per cent), in addition to other nationalities. Countries neighbouring Libya are likewise affected by these flows, albeit on a smaller scale.

Key intervention areas

- UNHCR in Mauritania and Morocco has put a special focus on the **support of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)**, including through setting up a shelter house for survivors of SGBV and trafficking in Mauritania and strengthening referral mechanisms in border areas in Morocco. In order to prevent SGBV, UNHCR will continue to support women at risk with cash-based interventions and set up a safe space for children in Nouadhibou, Mauritania.
- To identify people in need of international protection, UNHCR is undertaking **profiling activities of migratory flows protection** throughout the region and **building capacity of local authorities and civil society** to strengthen the protection of refugees, including through training in case management and the prevention of human trafficking.
- Through **outreach and early identification** of the most vulnerable people, UNHCR seeks to ensure timely assistance and protection in key locations in Libya, including through distributions of core relief items, cash assistance and quick impact projects, referral mechanisms and the roll-out of information campaigns. UNHCR will continue to support conflict-affected populations, including host communities, increasing the sustainability of the humanitarian response and strengthening ownership by relevant authorities.
- **Access to detention centres** and the identification and registration of people of concern remain crucial. UNHCR will continue to promote alternatives to detention, seek the immediate release of refugees and asylum-seekers, including unaccompanied separated children and other vulnerable people, and facilitate their evacuation to the ETM in Niger or directly to resettlement countries. In partnership with UNICEF and IOM, UNHCR is providing care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children, family tracing, and possible family reunification in line with the best interests of children.
- UNHCR will continue **providing protection monitoring at disembarkation points and humanitarian assistance** for effective identification of people of concern, including referral arrangements. Furthermore, the Office will increase the provision of permanent and mobile medical assistance, targeted age and gender-specific interventions, including on the prevention and response to SGBV and trafficking, and continue to provide trainings in international refugee law to the Libyan Coast Guard.
- UNHCR will **provide assistance to people in need of international protection via its two community development centres in Tripoli and through outreach visits** conducted by partners who also provide support to people of concern with specific needs, including unaccompanied and separated children and victims of trafficking, newly-released refugees and asylum-seekers with compelling protection needs.

Key recent achievements

UNHCR has successfully advocated for the release of over 1,600 people from detention in 2017 and 2018. In addition, **1,334 refugees have been evacuated from Libya**, including 1,020 individuals to Niger, 312 to Italy and two to UNHCR's Emergency Transit Centre in Romania since November 2017. UNHCR plans to evacuate or resettle between 5,000 and 10,000 vulnerable refugees from Libya in 2018.

UNHCR is in process of establishing a **"transit and departure facility"** in Tripoli for people in need of international protection. This initiative will facilitate the transfer of thousands of vulnerable refugees to third countries. At the facility, UNHCR staff and partners will provide registration and humanitarian assistance such as accommodation, food, medical care and psychosocial support. The facility is currently being renovated.

So far this year, UNHCR has conducted more than 180 monitoring visits to detention centres in Libya, with 1,080 such visits having been conducted in 2017. In coordination with IOM and through its partner, International Medical Corps, UNHCR continues to provide primary healthcare and assistance to refugees and migrants in detention centres.

In coordination with UN agencies and local partners, UNHCR is responding to the needs of nearly 165,500 IDPs and over 341,500 IDP returnees. Since the beginning of 2017, UNHCR supported more than 61,300 IDPs and returnees with core-relief and nearly 14,600 IDPs and returnees with cash based assistance. In 2018, UNHCR aims to support IDPs, returnees and host communities by implementing more than 200 quick impact projects throughout Libya.

In response to the crisis in Sabratha in October 2017, UNHCR fielded a **strong emergency response**. Following clashes in Sabratha, more than 18,000 migrants and refugees were discovered in the hands of smugglers and traffickers in different locations, including farms, houses and warehouses in and around the coastal city. From the beginning of the crisis, UNHCR staff were on the ground providing emergency assistance to refugees and migrants. Amongst those who suffered abuse at the hands of smugglers were pregnant women and new born infants.

Continuous challenges

- **Appropriate disembarkation and reception arrangements** are needed to ensure a response to the immediate basic needs of people upon disembarkation. UNHCR contributes to the construction of sanitation facilities, health posts and undertakes protection monitoring at 12 disembarkation points in Libya. As of 6 March 2018, the Libyan Coast Guard (LCG) rescued/intercepted 2,856 refugees and migrants in different locations along the Libyan coast. In 2017, the LCG rescued/intercepted 15,358 refugees and migrants at sea. At disembarkation points, UNHCR identifies people in need of international protection and provides life-saving assistance such as warm clothes, blankets and water.
- **Access to people of concern continues to be a challenge for UNHCR's operation in Libya.** It remains crucial that UNHCR has access to all people of concern **beyond the seven nationalities recognized by the authorities** to be of concern to the Office.
- **Arbitrary detention in conditions below international standards** remains a serious concern, despite the recent shift towards granting conditional release for evacuation through UNHCR. The Office consistently advocates for alternatives to detention and continuously highlights the need to improve conditions in detention centres to meet minimum standards of treatment.
- UNHCR's efforts to evacuate and resettle people of concern will remain limited in scale as long as **resettlement commitments are insufficient**. UNHCR launched an urgent appeal calling for 1,300 resettlement places to be made available by the end of March 2018 for highly vulnerable refugees stranded in Libya. So far, UNHCR has received 1,100 confirmed pledges for resettlement directly out of Libya.

Providing lifesaving assistance: the emergency evacuation transit mechanism

“These evacuations are the best example of the impact that international solidarity can have on refugees themselves”

– Vincent Cochetel, UNHCR’s Special Envoy for the Central Mediterranean Situation

Rahel*, a 29-year-old Eritrean refugee, was hoping for a new life of safety in Europe when she took the dangerous overland route across Africa. Instead, she found herself detained for 11 of the 18 months she spent in Libya.

“When UNHCR told me I was leaving Libya I wasn’t sure what to think, I didn’t believe them at first. Then when the bus came to fetch from the detention centre I understood it was true... I was happy to be alive,” she told UNHCR staff in Niger.



UNHCR staff welcome exhausted Eritrean and Somali refugees disembarking at Niamey International Airport, Niger following an emergency evacuation flight from Libya.
© UNHCR /Alessandro Penso

**Name has been changed for protection reasons.*

Europe



0%

Of resettlement departures from West Africa priority countries of asylum* were to EU+ resettlement countries**



12%

Of resettlement departures from East and Horn of Africa priority countries of asylum* were to EU+ resettlement countries**



32%

Protection rate in EU+*** region in 2017 for top 10 nationalities arriving in Italy



91%

Of children arriving in Italy are unaccompanied and separated

**The 15 priority countries of asylum are Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Niger and Sudan.*

***EU+ resettlement countries are Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.*

****EU+ region includes EU countries as well as Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.*

In 2017, 178,500 refugees and migrants arrived in Europe—a decrease of 53 per cent compared with 2016. This was largely due to a reduction in the numbers from Turkey to Greece—83 per cent reduction in 2017— and from Northern Africa to Italy—34 per cent reduction in 2017¹. **Women accounted for 13 per cent, children for 18 per cent** and 69 per cent were men. **Approximately half of the children arriving were unaccompanied or separated.** Despite the overall reduction in numbers, due to increasing restrictions to access territory, refugees and migrants continue to attempt to use different, and at times more dangerous routes to reach Europe, and to move onwards within Europe. The reception and asylum capacity of a number of countries, particularly those to which refugees and migrants arrive, remains under severe strain. It remains a key priority for UNHCR to provide support to existing government capacities and to ensure access to territory and to asylum, and that refugees' needs for protection, assistance and solutions, are met, with a particular focus on those with specific needs.

While Greece remains part of the situation, it has not been included in this appeal because a majority of its needs are expected to be covered by earmarked contributions. UNHCR's 2018 ExCom budget for Greece includes amounts to **\$232,766,204**. The Office will focus its interventions on the provision of cash assistance, which will reach 45,000 people in 2018, on an urban accommodation programme for asylum-seekers and refugees which will reach 27,000 spaces in 2018, and on protection

¹ Data for 2017 for sea arrivals to Italy, Greece and Cyprus and data from January to October 2017 for land and sea arrivals to Spain.

monitoring and provision of protection services, particularly for people with specific needs. UNHCR supports **effective access to asylum** through the provision of information, protection monitoring and interventions, the provision of legal aid to asylum-seekers and support to the Greek Asylum Service. UNHCR also works with the Government of Greece and civil society actors to prevent and respond to SGBV, including facilitating the access of survivors to multi-sectoral services, and is engaged in wide-ranging activities to **improve child protection**. UNHCR will also support the Government of Greece in **developing and implementing an integration strategy for recognized refugees**.

Key intervention areas

- Building on the Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP) and the Central Mediterranean Sea Initiative (CMSI), UNHCR and its partners will **continue supporting existing government capacity to ensure effective and safe access to asylum, protection and solutions** for those in need of international protection, based on the principles of solidarity and responsibility-sharing.
- Ensure that refugees and migrants have **access to services** in a participatory manner and with due attention to specific needs, in particular survivors of SGBV, unaccompanied and separated children, persons with disabilities, people who have experienced trauma and victims of trafficking.
- Systematically **engage with refugees and migrants in an age, gender and diversity sensitive manner** through a participatory dialogue on their rights and obligations, ensuring their voices are taken into account in decisions and policies impacting their lives, and support all stakeholders through information and data collection, reflecting key characteristics of the people crossing the central Mediterranean Sea.
- Increase safe and regulated **access to longer-term solutions** for refugees, in particular through resettlement and complementary pathways of admission, including family reunification, labour mobility schemes, scholarships and education programmes.
- Engage with a wide range of actors, including states, municipalities, civil society, EU institutions and agencies, NGOs, volunteers, the private sector, academic institutions and asylum-seekers and refugees, to **support the integration and social inclusion of refugees** into their new communities and countries.
- Advocate to maintain and **strengthen search and rescue capacity** in the central Mediterranean.

Key recent achievements

Important achievements were made in the area of **child protection**, particularly with respect to enhancing the protection of unaccompanied and separated children. Working together with partners, innovative projects to address challenges in areas such as guardianship, best interests determination, care arrangements, and building trust with children, are being carried out in Italy, Greece, Serbia, Sweden and Switzerland, among other countries.

UNHCR, together with partners, supported Government efforts to **improve reception conditions, provide access to multi-sectoral services, and enhance access to asylum throughout the region**. In Italy, UNHCR significantly strengthened its operational response, expanding counselling at disembarkation points and increasing its engagement in relation to SGBV prevention and response and child protection.

UNHCR has also supported efforts to **expand legal pathways for refugees to Europe**, including through family reunification, work and study visas and resettlement. During 2017, over 38,800 refugees were submitted by UNHCR for resettlement to 25 countries in Europe—36 per cent more than during 2016. In Germany and Sweden and many other countries in Western and Northern Europe, UNHCR expanded partnerships in the area of family reunification, to improve training of family reunification actors, to enhance tracing services and bolster travel assistance programmes.

UNHCR has increasingly **expanded partnerships with civil society actors, the private sector, mayors and local governments, NGOs, and refugees themselves**, bringing a diversity of experience, particularly in the area of integration. For instance, a Refugee Coalition was established bringing together refugee representatives throughout Europe, which aims at ensuring refugees' needs and opinions are better taken into account in decisions and policies affecting their lives. UNHCR and OECD have jointly engaged in efforts to engage the private sector in refugee integration.

UNHCR continued to build its capacity in the area of **data collection and information management**. Between February and December of 2017, the Mediterranean pages in UNHCR's data portal received approximately 785,000 page views from over 200,000 users, and 627,000 documents relating to the Mediterranean situation were downloaded in the same period.

Continuous challenges

- There are **continuing physical, legal and administrative restrictions** for people seeking protection and solutions in Europe. This includes push-backs at borders, often with violence, as well as increasing restrictions on access to asylum in some countries in the region.
- **Challenges in reception conditions persist**, in particular due to overcrowding and the lack of capacity to identify and provide services to those with specific needs.
- Despite welcome developments in relation to providing safe and legal pathways for people in need of international protection, there is a **need to further increase such pathways, including by increasing resettlement commitments and removing obstacles to family reunification**. Within the European Union, there is a need to ensure effective responsibility-sharing and support EU Member States facing pressure, including through a relocation mechanism that is able to be activated simply, quickly and with the full participation of EU Member States.

Hundreds of children lose lives on desperate sea journeys

“If people see no hope and live in fear, they will continue to gamble their lives making desperate journeys.”

- An asylum-seeker on her experience

The swell whipped up and Hope gathered her three young daughters close to her on the overcrowded dinghy. None were swimmers.

Swept up in violence in Nigeria, Hope**’s husband had already fled to Europe. Facing the same threats, Hope and her daughters followed on the dangerous trek north over the desert to Libya, before paying a smuggler to attempt the lethal crossing to Italy in a packed boat without life jackets, or even a satellite phone to call for help.

Infants and children are among the 8,500 refugees and migrants who have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean since toddler Aylan Kurdi drowned three years ago. UNHCR is highlighting the need for solutions and safer alternatives so that mothers such as Hope will stop risking their lives and their children’s on desperate journeys, although she believes she had little choice.



Hope, a 36-year-old asylum-seeker, kindergarten teacher and expectant mother from Nigeria who is still grieving for the loss of two daughters, visits their graves close to the reception centre in Messina, Sicily where she lives with her surviving daughter.
© UNHCR / Valentino Bellini.*

“When I decided to travel with my daughters, I had no other choice,” said Hope. “I could not return to my home as my husband’s enemies swore they would retaliate against his family. But I couldn’t stay in Libya either. The place had become too dangerous for the kids in the last year”.

**Name has been changed for protection reasons.*

Cross-regional priorities

The following thematic priorities are cross-regional and will be pursued in addition to country-specific activities.

1. Awareness raising

Access to accurate, reliable and relevant information is often considered as one of the most important and impactful measures in mixed movement contexts. Only through allowing individuals to take informed decisions, can current dynamics of abuse and exploitation be prevented. However, if not accompanied by meaningful operational activities, information alone will have little impact.

2. Anti-trafficking and protecting victims of trafficking

Human trafficking in people is a gross human rights violation which must be fought wherever it occurs, including through measures which have the protection of victims at their core. Automatic return for them cannot be the sole response. The clandestine nature of irregular movements combined with pre-existing vulnerable situations of people embarking on these journeys—including in countries of origin—often provide fertile grounds for traffickers to act and abuses to occur.

3. Research and data collection, analysis and sharing

Clear gaps remain in understanding, in a timely manner, the triggers, dynamics and forms of movements from countries of origin and first asylum to countries of destination. Analyses provided by other organizations do not always fully correspond to the protection needs of UNHCR's people of concern.

Building on the work done in the context of the refugee and migration emergency in Europe and complementing work by other actors, such as IOM and the Dakar and Nairobi-based Regional Mixed Migration Secretariats and its Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi), UNHCR will strengthen research and analysis at national and regional level, to better inform national and cross-border responses. UNHCR will also advocate for the harmonization of indicators and tools used by different agencies, in order to support data quality and consistency for future joint assessments.

Trafficking and smuggling

UNHCR continues to advocate **for a strong law enforcement component in tackling these illegal activities and dismantling the business models of smugglers and traffickers along the whole route**, from the start to the end of the journey. In parallel, activities for the protection of victims of trafficking and those at risk of being trafficked need to be expanded in countries of origin, along the route to and in Libya, as well as in Europe.

UNHCR will focus on:

1. Enhancing identification at borders, in detention and at disembarkation, greater access to safety shelters and witness protection, further develop existing referral mechanism and continue to enhance provision of information to new arrivals in Italy and elsewhere in Europe.
2. Ending the supply of unseaworthy boats used by smugglers and traffickers in Libya.
3. Engaging non-state actors along the routes and exploring alternative ways to capitalize on human mobility.
4. Developing effective transnational cooperation between entities involved in fighting trafficking and strengthen sharing of information and good practices.
5. Developing a specific law enforcement and protection strategy to combat the ongoing criminal transnational activities related to the sexual exploitation of women and girls trafficked from Nigeria and other countries via the Mediterranean Sea.
6. Using, and where possible strengthen, existing mechanisms, such as the Sanctions Committee on Libya and national and regional anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking legislations and action plans.

Coordination and working in partnership

The High Commissioner's Special Envoy for the central Mediterranean route situation (SECM) will facilitate coordination and cooperation notably through inter-regional and inter-agency fora. The SECM will support integrated policy synergies and practices, building on the CMSI and the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants. The SECM will also focus on a harmonized approach to solutions, including through the CRRF (in Ethiopia and Somalia) and will suggest targeted programmatic interventions to mitigate the risks related to these journeys and find solutions. To maximize synergies and impact, the SECM will seek to ensure that UNHCR builds on existing mechanisms rather than creating new ones.

In this regard, all of the planned activities will be undertaken in accordance with the multi-stakeholder, "whole-of- society" approach endorsed by the General Assembly in the New York Declaration, involving "national and local authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions, regional organizations, regional coordination and partnership mechanisms, civil society partners, including faith-based organizations and academia, the private sector, media and the refugees themselves".

In particular, the coordination and partnership with regional partners such as the African Union, ECOWAS, IGAD, EAC, and the EU will prove instrumental in the search for lasting solutions in view of the cross-regional dimension of the issue. UNHCR will therefore look to further its contribution to regional mechanisms to advance its protection and solutions agenda. International Financial Institutions, including the World Bank and regional development banks, will be critical in leveraging development financing to address root causes of displacement and develop alternative opportunities. Finally, the Office will ensure that the activities foreseen in this Supplementary Appeal build on and complement ongoing initiatives and projects while maximizing opportunities for joint programming, in particular with IOM.

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE SITUATION

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Rescued refugees look through the window of the Phoenix rescue boat as it leaves the coast of Malta bound for Italy. © UNHCR/Giuseppe Carotenuto